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Nick Carter Stories

THE CRIME OF THE WHITE HAND

OR

HOW NICK CARTER WORKED IT OUT

NICK CARTER STORIES

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The Crime of the White Hand;

Or, HOW NICK CARTER WORKED IT OUT.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE THEFT OF THE MISSAL.

"What do you make of it, Nick?"

"I don't make anything of it, offhand, lieutenant."

"Do you mean to say that you don't suspect anybody?"

"I have not said that," said Nick Carter, with a smile. "Then you do suspect, and——"

"My dear Lodge, please give me a little time."

The famous detective—who had been in New York only four days, after spending more than a week on the Delaware coast—arose from his chair and looked thoughtfully out of the window at the noisy street and the dingy business buildings opposite.

He was in the private room of Lieutenant Lodge, of the detective bureau, at police headquarters, and he had been listening to the details of the newest sensational crime in the metropolis."

"You say that the woman who called on Mr. Bassett, the well-known collector of art works and particularly valuable and rare books, was young, beautiful, and handsomely dressed?" he said suddenly, turning from the window.

"Yes. She was a peach, according to the two clerks in the outer room," returned the lieutenant.

"How did she come to Mr. Bassett's place? She did not walk, I suppose?"

"Hardly. She was in a limousine—a very fine machine, too."

"Anybody with her?"

"Nobody but the chauffeur. He sat at his wheel while she was in the house. As soon as she came out with the book and got into the car he drove away."

"Fast?"

"Not fast enough to make the traffic policeman stop him."

"I see. But he speeded up to the limit, didn't he?"

"Yes."

"Now, tell me exactly what happened. Go over the whole case again just as you did at first."

Lieutenant Lodge looked from under his bushy eyebrows at Nick Carter as if he thought this superfluous. But he knew the renowned detective well enough to be sure that there was a purpose behind the request, and he obeyed without protest.

"Solomon Bassett has a suite of rooms in the Priestman Building, in Forty-second Street. You know that, of course?"

Nick Carter nodded.

"He deals in costly books, pictures, and antique jewelry. His deals are always up in the thousands, going sometimes to the hundreds of thousands, and even to a million. At least, he has had one million-dollar deal, to my knowledge."

"I remember that," put in Nick Carter quietly. "It was for three pictures sold to Senator Jorkinson a year ago. Go ahead!"

"This woman came to Bassett's place yesterday afternoon and asked to see the Raymond missal. It is——"

"I know," interrupted the detective. "It is an illuminated mass book, dating from the Twelfth Century, and is one of the most valuable of such volumes known. It is encrusted with diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires, so that the binding would bring, intrinsically, hundreds of thousands of dollars."

"That's right. I'm told it is a fine thing, in its way. The paintings inside were done by monks, they say. Some of it was by one of the popes—I forget which one—and the whole book is something that only a big millionaire could ever buy."

"And this woman wanted to buy it?" asked the detective.

"She asked to see it. She said she lived in Brazil, and that her husband was one of the biggest men in the gov-

ernment there, although she was an American—born in Boston."

"Mr. Bassett showed her the book?"

"Yes, after considerable persuasion. It's a thing he is not in the habit of exhibiting to strangers. It is too valuable. At last he brought it from his safe and placed it on a table in the middle of the room. It is a mass of precious stones on both covers. As he tells the story, he bent over the book, holding it in both hands, while the woman stood at his side looking over his shoulder."

"I understand. The doors were closed, of course?" asked Nick.

"Yes. There are two. One leads to the outer apartment, or office, where the clerks are, and where Mr. Bassett sometimes sees customers, and the other goes to the private apartments of the old man. He lives there alone."

"And suddenly he lost consciousness?"

"Yes. He says he remembers the white hand of the woman coming before his face, and he thinks she touched his lips. He is not sure of that. But he is certain that he lost his senses as her hand came in front of his face. When he came partly to himself, he was lying on the floor. There was an electric bell button sticking up through the carpet, under the table. It was supposed to be operated by the foot. He pressed it with his hand, and one of his clerks came into the room in response."

"You say the lady had a white hand. Do you mean that she was ungloved?" asked Nick.

"Mr. Bassett was a little uncertain. He could not say whether it was a white glove or not."

"Probably it was. It would be easier for her to conceal some strong drug with a glove than if she used her bare hand. Besides, she would have been noticeable without gloves, if she was so fashionably dressed."

"Anyhow, when the clerk came in and found Mr. Bassett partly under the table, and very much dazed, he also discovered that the book was gone. One of our men saw the lady come out of the building with a parcel loosely done up in brown paper, and get into the car. The elevator man did not remember her at all."

"And that's the whole case?" suggested Nick Carter.

"Not exactly. The missal is a mass of precious stones, as I have told you. They are encrusted on the covers, and are worth an enormous fortune in themselves. But when the woman snatched the book away—as probably she did—she seems to have been nervous, for one of the covers was left behind. It had been loose, Mr. Bassett said, and he had been considering the advisability of having it mended."

"And when she picked up the book she tore the cover away altogether?" remarked Nick. "That must reduce the value of what she stole considerably."

"Mr. Bassett says it makes the missal worth hardly any thing, beyond the value of the gems. He speaks comparatively, of course. The missal, in its perfect state, is valued at four hundred thousand dollars. With one cover gone, it would not bring more than a fourth of that sum."

"That is not to be sneezed at," smiled the detective. "Still, I am glad the thief did not get that other cover. There will be our chance to land her, I think."

"You mean that she will come back for that other cover?"

"Perhaps," answered Nick Carter slowly. "You can't give me any definite description of her, I suppose?"

"Only that she is young and good looking."

"That applies to a very large proportion of the feminine population of New York," smiled the detective. "I'll go and have a look at Mr. Bassett's rooms."

"Do you know him? Want me to go around with you?"

"No, thanks. I know Mr. Bassett, and he knows me. I'll let you know when I have found out something."

Lieutenant Lodge noted that Nick Carter had said "when" he found out something—not "if." He grinned with satisfaction.

The detective did not go direct to Mr. Bassett's place of business when he left police headquarters. Instead, he took a car and hurried to his home in Madison Avenue.

Chick was in the library when he entered, and that able assistant was so busy at his desk about some routine work that he merely nodded as his chief came in.

"Chick!"

"Yes?"

"You remember Jared Spanner?"

"Of course. He is supposed to be the uncle of Mademoiselle Valeria, and he poses as the owner of the steam yacht *Idaline*, which we know belongs to her."

Chick rattled this off as if it were hardly worth repeating to one who knew the facts so well as Nick Carter. Then he looked inquiringly at his chief, as if to ask what Jared Spanner was about now.

"Spanner has stolen a book worth four hundred thousand dollars, Chick," went on Nick. "At least, if he hasn't done it, he is mixed up in the job."

"Four hundred thousand dollars?" repeated Chick. "Whew! Where is there a book worth that much?"

"There are several of them in the British Museum, the Bodleian library, and our own Museum of Art, in New York," answered Nick. "They are not for sale, even at that price, however. But that is not the point. I saw Spanner this morning, as I went downtown."

"Why didn't you nail him?" demanded Chick. "You have plenty of reason for it. He helped to abduct that Mrs. van Dietrich, and he would have murdered you if he could. He cut us down with his yacht when we were in a small boat, down there in Delaware, and——"

"That will do, Chick!" interrupted Nick Carter. "Don't jump to conclusions. He didn't direct that yacht toward our boat. He didn't even see us, I believe."

"He'd have done it if he could," persisted Chick. "I should say he ought to be arrested if ever we get him here in New York."

"Exactly. That's what we are going to do. But before we can arrest a criminal, we have to catch him. Jared Spanner was in a subway train, going uptown, when I passed him as I was going downtown. Both trains were moving. That's why I didn't nail him."

"Oh!" grunted Chick.

"What I want you to do is to act as a clerk in the office of Solomon Bassett, in Forty-second Street. I'll get you the position."

"What am I to do when I'm there?"

"Arrest Jared Spanner," replied Nick quietly.

work.

CHAPTER II.

THE ENEMY STILL ACTIVE.

When Nick Carter promised to get Chick a position as clerk in the establishment of Solomon Bassett, the well-known dealer in rare books and art objects, he did not reckon on the old gentleman's obstinacy.

It was the forenoon of the day after the theft of the precious Twelfth-century missal when Nick Carter, in response to an urgent request by telephone, had gone to police headquarters to confer with Lieutenant Lodge.

Not until well into the afternoon did the detective go up to the rooms in the Priestman Building, where Solomon Bassett lived alone, in bachelor quarters, and also conducted his very exclusive business.

There were four rooms, altogether. Only one door was used to get into any of them. That was in what Bassett called his outer office and store.

In this office were cases of thick plate glass, further reënforced by steel bars, and on some cases, where exceedingly precious articles were on view, there were solid steel covers, which were removed only by Bassett himself, when he decided to exhibit them to some properly meek patron.

Some books were in the outer office—all valuable, because Solomon Bassett would not have in his place any that were not—but the most rare and precious volumes were kept in the inner office, which was the sanctum of the proprietor.

Two clerks were always on duty in the outer office. They met would-be customers, and, after assuring themselves that a caller was worthy of an interview with the chief, would go in and tell what they thought of the visitor.

Then, if Mr. Bassett happened to be in a good humor—which was not always the case—he would see the applicant. For it was as an "applicant" that everybody was expected to open negotiations with Solomon Bassett.

He was reported to be fabulously wealthy, and it was understood that he did not conduct his business for profit, but simply because he was an enthusiast.

Even when he did sell anything from his stock, it was done in a grudging way, and in several cases he had offered much more money than he had been paid for the immediate return of some favorite picture, bit of ivory, old jewel, or rare volume.

Nick Carter was one of Solomon Bassett's few friends. The old man had the greatest admiration for the celebrated detective, and instructions had been given to his clerks always to bring Nick right in—except when Solomon happened to be engaged.

In that contingency, the clerk's business was to open the door and announce "Mr. Carter." Then he was to go out, and it was sure not to be long before the person who had been taking up the old gentleman's time would find himself dismissed.

"You're not looking well, Mr. Bassett," was Nick Carter's greeting, as he went into the sanctum this afternoon.

"Never better in my life," growled the other.

Bassett was a tall, thin, gray-haired man, with a straggly gray beard and sharp black eyes under gray, bushy eyebrows. He had a hook nose and thin, straight lips. His clothing was threadbare and shiny, but he had, at the end of a plaited leather watchguard, a gold chronometer that had belonged to Louis XIV., and which would have brought a fortune if he had been willing to sell it, while on the third finger of his left hand was a solitaire ruby that was said to have once adorned the hand of Cleopatra.

"Your adventure of yesterday afternoon did not leave any evil effects, then?" went on Nick, as he took the chair the old man indicated.

"I had no adventure," grunted Bassett.

"No?"

"No."

Nick Carter knew his man, and he did not speak for nearly two minutes. He was aware that Bassett was trying to tire out his patience, hoping to compel him to say something else, and thus lay himself open to a snub.

At last Bassett had to give in. He changed his manner abruptly, and, leaning across the table, put his long, thin hand on the detective's arm.

"Nick, I'm glad you came," he whispered.

"I knew you would be."

"I have kept this matter as quiet as I could. One of my fool clerks let it out to the police, and I discharged him at once."

"I saw two clerks out there just now," remarked Nick.

"I thought they were the same as usual. One of them was, I am sure. I could not see the face of the other. He was bending over a case in a corner."

"Never mind about him," interrupted Bassett testily. "I want you to help me get back that missal."

"I understand it was a lady who took it. Had you ever seen her before yesterday?"

"Yes. If I hadn't, she never would have had a chance even to see that book, much less get it away from me."

"Who is she?"

"She says she is Mrs. Chessington. Her husband is an Englishman, she told me, who had gone down to Brazil some years ago and got into favor with the government. They live at Rio Janeiro, according to her, and he is many times a millionaire."

"She travels a great deal by herself, and I must confess she has considerable taste in art. She knows a good thing when she sees it, and she has the history of a number of books and pictures in my collection."

"You took to her, then?"

"Very much! Durned old fool that I am!" grunted Bassett. "She knew the history of this Raymond missal better than I did. She told me all I knew about it, and then added a chapter or two that she picked up from some old Latin book she says she has at home."

"Well?"

"When she talked in that way, of course I relaxed some of the vigilance I usually exercise when I have a precious object on view. That gave her the chance, and you know what happened."

Nick Carter nodded.

"You say she travels a great deal. When did she come to New York, and where has she been living?"

"At the Hotel Supremacy. But she isn't there now. She left yesterday afternoon, saying she was going to California, intending to sail for Japan. A lie, of course, about where she has gone. But it is more than enough for me that she left the hotel, bag and baggage, maid and all."

"Don't the hotel people know where she went from there?"

"Yes. She had all her things taken to the Grand Central Station—piled up in the baggage room—and it was understood that her maid was getting railroad tickets. No tickets were bought, and an hour afterward not a trunk or bag belonging to Mrs. Chessington was at the depot."

"Where had they gone?"

"I don't know. They were removed in a wagon that had no name on it, and that is all anybody could tell the police to-day."

"Where is the cover of the missal—the part she left behind?"

Solomon Bassett went to the door to the outer office, peeped out, and locked it. Then he looked into his private apartment to which the other door gave access.

Next he pulled down the thick green window shade and switched on a shaded electric lamp on his big table.

All this was done with a caution which indicated the importance of what he was about to produce.

"One moment, Mr. Bassett!" interrupted Nick Carter. "Was the room in darkness—so far as daylight is concerned—like this, when Mrs. Chessington was here?"

"Yes. I never bring out valuables of any kind without taking the precaution to pull down that green window shade. There are no windows overlooking me that I know of. But there might be somebody at a distance with a powerful glass who could see what I was doing."

"I understand. Tell me about Mrs. Chessington."

"I brought out the missal and placed it on the table, just as I am doing with this cover," went on the old man.

He brought to the table from a safe on one side of the room a large, nearly square board, more than an inch thick, and one edge of which was ragged, as if it had been torn forcibly away from something else.

The board seemed to be of leather, although there may have been wood as a foundation. The leather, wherever it could be seen for jewels, was richly embossed with gold, and its general design showed that it had been the work of some of the wonderfully skillful ecclesiastics of the early Middle Ages, who devoted whole lives to such productions.

Large diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, and opals were piled one on the other all over the large square. They were worked into curious figures for the most part, although it was not easy to say what those figures represented.

Not only was the outside of the board covered with gems. Inside, where a yellowed parchment still adhered, showing that it had been the interior of the cover, were a perfect wilderness of smaller precious stones of all kinds. They were ingeniously let into the cover so that the book would lie flat, with the lid snugly fitted.

"It seems as if they had more shiners than they knew what to do with in those old days," remarked Nick. "When the woman—Mrs. Chessington—took the missal, this cover was accidentally torn off, I understand?"

"Yes. It was very loose, anyhow. But the work of restoring a priceless volume like this is not to be undertaken without due consideration. That is why it had not been done."

Nick Carter examined the cover thoughtfully for some minutes. He looked at it from every point of view, and he felt the stone with the tips of his finger, noting how firmly they were embedded in the leather.

"You say that the absence of this cover from [illegible] reduces its value three-fourths, Mr. Bassett?"

"For the collector—yes. It makes the difference between a perfect example of the most magnificent work of that period and a fragment."

"Then it is likely that the person who has the book is likely to try for the cover?"

Solomon Bassett gave vent to a grim chuckle.

"Let that person try it," he growled. "Woman or man or child, I would shoot that person down as ruthlessly as I would a marauding rat."

The old man's jaws closed with a snap. There was not the slightest reason to doubt that he meant all he said. His anger was murderous.

"Well, I think that is enough," remarked Nick, as he still held the cover in his hand. "You might as well put this away. I suppose the remainder of the volume—that which is stolen—is like this in its general scheme? It should be easy to recognize it after examining the cover?"

"I'll recognize it if ever I clap my eyes on it," roared Bassett. "So will you. I only hope one of us will get a look at it."

The old gentleman put out his hand to take the glittering square of board from Nick Carter, who extended it, when, suddenly, out went the electric light.

At the same instant Nick Carter and Solomon Bassett both fell across the heavy table, unconscious.

CHAPTER III.

SCRATCHES AS CLEWS.

How long they lay like that, Nick Carter could not have told.

He was the first of the two to come to his senses, and he groped mechanically about the table for the gem-studded book cover.

"I can't find it," he muttered. "But——"

He found the flash light he always carried in his pocket and sent a shaft of light across the table. It fell upon the pallid features of Solomon Bassett, still in a swoon-like stupor.

There was nothing else on the table. The missal cover was gone!

"I should have been surprised if it hadn't," muttered the detective. "But I hope they haven't killed Bassett."

A cursory examination of the old man satisfied him that he was not dead.

A few moments' treatment with some of the restoratives from Nick Carter's pocket medicine case brought Solomon Bassett partly to his senses, although he was not fully restored.

Nick placed him in a large easy-chair—with "wings" from the back on either side, which kept off fugitive drafts, and which was Bassett's own particular seat—and then went to the door leading to the front office.

The door was locked, just as it had been before they began to examine the missal cover.

The key was inside. It had been left that way by the old man when he turned it in the lock.

Nick Carter allowed a peculiar half smile to pass across his lips. He had noticed a coincidence that appealed to his detective instinct at once.

"The door locked and the key still inside," he murmured. "I have seen that same method before. Mademoiselle Valeria! I am inclined to believe this is your

work. You left the key inside of Mrs. van Dietrich's room when you spirited her away at that hotel down in Delaware."

He took the key out of the lock and examined it closely by his flash, reënforced by the electric lamp.

"Yes. Here we are," he continued softly. "I see marks on the end of the key. Wait a moment. I'll make sure."

He drew from his pocket a small, but very powerful, microscope, fitted into a leather case.

"If there really is anything there, this will bring it out," was his confident remark to himself.

He held the strong glass over the key, the two lights bearing directly upon it.

A number of scratches were plainly visible, as if the end of the key had been tightly clutched with a steel instrument of some kind.

"An 'outsider' was used on this key, just as it was on Mr. van D.'s," he murmured. "That doesn't prove that the same hand did both jobs—at least, not without corroborative evidence. But I think I can get that evidence in due course."

He put the key in the door again and went into the main office.

It was then that he discovered that it was night. He and Solomon Bassett had been lying across the table for four hours.

It had been past five o'clock when the detective went into the office. It was twenty minutes to ten now.

The outer door was closed and fastened with the spring lock, which was always its protection at night, until Solomon Bassett shot two heavy bolts within and attached the burglar alarm.

Ordinarily, the old man bolted the door and connected up the burglar alarm as soon as his clerks were outside.

Nick Carter was bending down, with his flash light, looking for something that might have assisted him to trace the thieves, when he heard a soft sound outside the door. It seemed as if somebody was passing his hand over the panels, trying to find the handle.

"Perhaps they have come back, thinking we are still out of this world," was Nick's inward conjecture.

With a lightning-swift movement, he turned back the spring lock, flung the door open, and grabbed by the throat the man outside.

He had pocketed his flash lamp, so that he could have his hands free, and there was no light.

The man he had seized was not inclined to yield. Without uttering a sound, he wrestled with the detective so desperately that it was five minutes before Nick could pin him against the wall, his knee up and one hand holding back a very powerful arm.

Having gone thus far, he drew out his flash and turned it full into the face of the stranger.

As he did so, Nick Carter uttered a low laugh of intense amusement, then he dropped hand and knee together.

"Chick!"

"That's what!" snorted Chick. "Holy patriarchs! What a grip you have, chief! I was wondering who the other man could be besides you that had a hold like that. I'm disappointed. I tell you!"

"Disappointed because you couldn't get the best of me?" laughed Nick, as he drew his assistant into the office and closed the door.

"No. If I'd known who it was, I wouldn't have thought of that. I'll tell you later. I believe I can put up a fair scrap against the average man. But I am not flattering myself that I can get away with a human threshing machine. What's going on here?"

"They've got away with the other part of that missal."

"What?"

"It's the truth, Chick. They took it right from under my nose, too."

"Oh, come off!"

"That's what they did," insisted the detective. "What are you doing here? I mean, why did you come?"

"Well, you didn't come home, and I did not feel at my ease about it. I saw something about six o'clock that made me still more doubtful."

"What was that?"

"I believe I had a glimpse of Mademoiselle Valeria. That's what I am disappointed about. She was in a limousine, and she was going uptown, along Fifth Avenue, about as fast as they let you drive there. She'd have gone faster, I guess, only she had to keep in line with the other cars. There's a general rush uptown about that time. What I'm mad about is that she got away from me."

"Did you notice who was driving?"

"Looked like a little fellow. But he was muffled up in a fur overcoat, and had goggles on."

"She was alone in the car?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure it was Valeria?" asked Nick thoughtfully.

"I couldn't be sure, because she had a veil on, and the clothes she wore weren't like any I've seen her in before."

"That doesn't prove anything," remarked the detective. "She does not wear the same costume many times. One of her weaknesses is dress, and she indulges it to the utmost. I have little doubt it was Valeria. It looks as if this missal affair could be traced to her, too."

At this moment the door leading to the inner office opened, and Solomon Bassett, white and scared looking, tottered out.

"Have they got us again, Nick?" he whispered. "I feel just as I did yesterday afternoon, and it is the same drug, I am sure."

Nick Carter looked at him eagerly.

"You recognize the odor, do you, Mr. Bassett?"

"Beyond question. You notice a strong smell, do you not?"

"Yes. It is like peach blossoms. Some sort of cyanide, of course. It is ingeniously compounded, so that it renders the subject unconscious, without killing him. A slight mistake in the proportions would mean death. It is well for us this stuff was prepared by a good chemist."

"And the cover of my Raymond missal is gone. I knew there was no need to look, because that was the only thing a thief would be after in this room just now."

"Yes, it is gone," said Nick. "Who was the new clerk you had yesterday?"

"You think it was his doings?"

"It is possible. He may have applied for the situation with an eye to that missal."

"I don't know much about him, except that he had a letter of reference from my old friend Wormsley, of London. Wormsley is in the same business, and a man who suited him would surely be useful to me. That's

how I argued it. This clerk said he could get several references from New York business men and collectors, and that he would do so, if I required them."

"And did he?"

"Why, no. He had no time to do it, for one thing. Besides, he seemed so straightforward and looked so honest, that I did not bother about it. He knew a great deal about old books, too. I soon found that out."

"Where does he live?"

"He gave me an address in Jersey, twenty miles from New York."

"False, of course," observed Nick. "What have you found, Chick?" he asked suddenly of his assistant, although he seemed not to have been noticing anything but Bassett himself.

"This."

Chick held up a scrap of dark-blue cloth, about six inches long and two wide.

"Where did you find it, Chick?"

Nick was examining the fragment under the electric light, while a gleam of satisfaction showed in his eyes.

"Over there by the door."

"Mr. Bassett," said Nick, holding up the cloth before the old man's eyes, "do you remember what sort of coat your new clerk wore?"

"Dark-blue coat and gray trousers. I remember noticing the coat particularly, as he stood directly under the electric light, while I was talking to him. Let me see that piece."

Nick held out the fragment to him, and he took it eagerly, examining it under the light with keen eyes and bent brows.

"Well?" asked Nick.

"It was cloth like that. Of course, I can't swear to it, because there are thousands of men in New York today going around with dark-blue coats."

"But, taking into consideration that your clerk had such a coat and was in this office, and that you really know nothing about him, it is reasonable to infer that this cloth came from his garment," interrupted Nick.

"It may have been."

Nick went over to the door and examined the lock. Then he looked at it through his microscope and nodded his satisfaction.

"That strip of cloth was torn from somebody's coat as he went out of this room in a hurry," he declared quietly.

"Why do you think so?" demanded Bassett.

"Look at the lock through this microscope, Mr. Bassett, while I turn my flash light on it. What do you see?"

"By Cæsar! There's a little bit of the cloth fastened to the snapper. It's blue, too. You can see it quite plainly through your glass. Well, that makes that certain, at all events. But how will it help us to find him?"

"I'll show you in the course of half an hour or less," replied Nick.

"You want Captain, I suppose?" queried Chick.

"Of course. Jump into a taxicab. You'll find plenty at the corner of the street, even if you don't pick up one at the door. Hustle down home and bring Captain."

Almost before the instructions were out of Nick Carter's mouth, his assistant was gone.

"Who's Captain?" asked Bassett, when they were alone.

"My bloodhound," was Nick Carter's reply. "He has been trained to police work. He has a wonderful and unerring scent, and Chick declares that his intelligence is only just short of human. I am inclined to think so myself."

"You think he will find that clerk?"

"If he is in New York or anywhere else on dry land," was the detective's confident response.

CHAPTER IV.

WHERE CAPTAIN LOST THE SCENT.

"Here you are, Captain!" Chick whispered to the great bloodhound, as, after bringing him into Solomon Bassett's domain, he gave him the scrap of cloth to smell. "Seek!"

It was difficult to hold the great creature any longer. He had taken a long sniff at the blue-black cloth, and then had raised his head to utter the peculiar whine which betokened that he knew what he had to do.

"What name did the clerk give you, Mr. Bassett?" asked Nick.

"John Holmes."

"And who is the old one? I mean the clerk you have had for a long time?"

"Max Olsen. He is an old friend of mine, and as honest as daylight. You need not think about him in this connection," returned Bassett.

"I believe that. Nevertheless, I shall ask Mr. Olsen what he knows about this affair. He was in the outer office with Holmes, remember."

"Please yourself," answered the old man indifferently. "But you will be wasting your time. He boards at 14A West Fifty-ninth Street. It's a quiet, highly respectable private house, and Olsen is the oldest boarder they have."

Nick made a note of the address. Then he turned to his assistant.

"Chick, you go with Captain. At precisely eleven o'clock telephone me at the Hotel Mammoth. I will be about the lobby, and they will page me when your call comes. Understand?"

They opened the door, and Captain bolted through the opening so hurriedly that Chick was obliged to follow on the jump, unless he meant to let go of the leash.

"Now, Mr. Bassett," said Nick, "I am going. You will see me in the morning, if I can manage it. If I don't come, you will know that I am working on the case. So don't worry. Carry on your business as usual, and have patience."

"Patience!" echoed the old man, raising eyes and hands together. "If you'd lost a book that is absolutely beyond price, I wonder whether you would have patience."

"I wonder!" Nick conceded. "However, do as I say. Be careful to lock up securely to-night, and do not leave your key in the lock. Shoot all your bolts, and put a chair tilted against the door of your outer office, so that if it is pushed over, the noise will be sure to wake you."

"I have a burglar alarm."

"So I saw," was Nick's cool response. "But it's out of commission. The gang that took your missal was not likely to leave anything of that kind in operation. Some of them might want to come back."

Solomon Bassett answered nothing in words. He began

to feel as if he were fairly hemmed in by insidious, ruthless enemies.

He examined his safes to make sure they were properly fastened, and then sat down at the large, baize-covered table in his private room, with his head in his hands. He was the picture of despair.

Nick placed a friendly hand upon his shoulder.

"Don't give up," he said. "That missal is coming back to you, and it will surprise me if I don't round up the gang at the same time."

Bassett shook his head despondingly.

"You may, Nick. I don't know. I'll do what you say. But when it is possible for me to be robbed on two afternoons in succession, with my people all about me, and business in full swing everywhere, I have not much faith in anything."

Nick remained a little longer, endeavoring to make the old man take a more hopeful view of things. Then he went out.

He stayed in the dark hall for some minutes, listening to Solomon Bassett locking and fastening up generally within.

As he walked along to the single elevator that was kept running at night, and was hustled down to the ground floor, he mused deeply on the complications that had arisen in this extraordinary case.

"I'll have to trust to Captain for the first and most important move," was his conclusion. "After the good old dog has put us on the track of Holmes, it ought not to be difficult to run him down. The interesting question, to me, is who John Holmes will turn out to be."

He gained the street and walked swiftly along to the corner of Broadway, where he plunged into the subway at Times Square and rode up to Fifty-ninth Street.

Only a very small number of the passengers in the car recognized him as the famous detective.

Well known as was his name, not only in New York, but all over the world, Nick Carter did not allow his face to become known more than he could help.

He could not prevent some people knowing him, however, and he had the features of a man who was not easily forgotten.

So it was with some little annoyance that he saw two or three men glancing at him from time to time, and heard a low whisper from somewhere: "That's Nick Carter, the detective."

"I hope they are not connected with the gang," he thought. "I didn't see what became of them when they got off the train. There's one comfort, I shall know them again if I happen to see them."

At the boarding house where Max Olsen lived, Nick had a disappointment.

Mr. Olsen had not been home to dinner that evening, and he was not in his room.

"Is that usual?" asked Nick. "Does Mr. Olsen often stay out after leaving his business, dining somewhere away from home?"

"He never did it before," answered the landlady, a positive-spoken, good-humored woman of fifty. "Not because he couldn't," she added quickly. "Mr. Olsen has had hundreds of invitations to dinner, to my knowledge. He has boarded with me for ten years, ever since he came from Washington, where he had been a librarian, you know."

Nick nodded.

"He's a splendid gentleman," continued the good woman. "Magnificently educated. He knows all the professors at Columbia and at Yale and Princeton and other universities, too. Some professors in England and Germany are his friends, as well. I know, because he gets letters from them. He's a careless man about things, and he often leaves letters open in his room."

"I understand," said Nick, with a smile. "I'm sorry I did not find Mr. Olsen at home. I wanted to see him rather particularly. However, I'll call again."

"Who shall I tell him came, in case he asks?"

"Colonel Pearson," answered Nick, as he turned to go away.

The detective's mind was busy as he lighted a cigar and strolled leisurely toward the Hotel Mammoth. He had plenty of time before eleven o'clock, when Chick was to telephone him.

What was the reason that Max Olsen, who never had been absent from dinner in his boarding house for ten years, should choose this particular evening not to go home? Here it was nearly eleven o'clock and he had not returned. What could it mean?

"If I didn't know it is impossible for him to be dishonest, I might think he is mixed up in the job with the other man. But that can't be. I know Max Olsen. He is absolutely straight, and most of the time he is in a mist, thinking of things altogether removed from what goes on around him. No, it could not be Olsen in this thing."

Still, the detective was not quite satisfied. He had known the most unlikely people to fall in criminal ways, so that he could not swear to anybody being beyond temptation.

Only he could not reconcile crookedness with the studious, dreamy Max Olsen, no matter what the circumstances might be that could conceivably lead to such a suspicion.

He had been seated in the comfortable writing room of the hotel not more than ten minutes, and was in the act of cutting off the end of a second perfecto, when a uniformed attaché of the hotel came through the apartment, singsonging:

"Colonel Pearson! Colonel Pearson, please! Colonel Pearson!"

"Hello!" cried Nick. "I am Colonel Pearson. Who wants me?"

"Telephone call, sir! This way!"

The young man led him to the telephone booths, and the attendant gave him the number of his booth, in the usual colorless tone of the experienced switchboard operator:

"Number two!"

"Hello, colonel!" came Chick's voice over the wire.

"That you, Chick?"

"Yes. All right, chief! I know your voice. Did you find your man?"

"No. What about Captain?"

"He's run me up to the Harlem River, just below High Bridge, and there he's stumped. Lost the scent."

"Our man's taken to the river, then?"

"That's what it looks like."

"Can't you pick up anything from anybody up there?"

"No one about."

"Go to Jim Bradley and tell him I want that fast motor boat. Have it ready by the time I get up there," directed Nick shortly.

"You'll come to Bradley's, of course?"

"Yes."

"All right. I'll have the launch ready. Captain is all right. Came straight here. Isn't he the great dog?"

Chick never lost an opportunity to say something admiringly about the magnificent bloodhound, even over a telephone.

Nick Carter laughed as he hung up the receiver.

CHAPTER V.

BOARDED BY THE ENEMY.

Jim Bradley was a brawny, deep-chested, red-faced man, who in his day had been a champion oarsman. To-day he was proprietor of a saloon in the waterside district of the Harlem River, and also owned a number of skiffs and other craft, that he rented to any one who came.

For Nick Carter, Jim Bradley had the highest regard.

The detective was a fine oarsman for one thing. In addition, he was an all-around athlete. These things appealed strongly to Bradley.

"I have your motor boat ready," were Jim Bradley's first words, as the detective came to the outside of the saloon. "Chick said you wanted a fast one, so I've given you the *Streak*. You know her. You've run her before."

"That's the one I hoped we should get," returned Nick. "Where is she?"

"Down at the landing. Chick is there, too—and the dog."

"Very well! I don't want to take the dog. Can you mind him for us till we get back?"

"Sure," agreed Bradley heartily. "Old Captain and I are side partners. He'll stay all right with me."

Chick was sitting in the *Streak*, getting her ready to start. She was a rather large vessel of her kind, with a cabin amidships that was large enough for four people to lie down, if necessary, but without much head room.

"That cabin's meant more for shelter in bad weather, and for one or two fellows to snooze in while another one runs the boat, than for a regular sitting room," was the way Jim Bradley had spoken of it one day.

There was a good engine, and plenty of space for half a dozen persons outside of the cabin. Moreover, there were lockers, in which was stored biscuits and other provender, with several gallons of fresh water, for use in an emergency.

The *Streak* was intended to be a sea-going boat, if required. There was always a chance of her being beaten far away from shore if she happened to get into a sharp land breeze.

"How long do you think you'll be away, Mr. Carter?" asked Jim Bradley, as the detective settled himself to the wheel.

"I dare say we'll be back in less than twenty-four hours," was the reply. "Cast off, Jim!"

Down the Harlem they went spinning, out to the East River, and down toward the bay.

"You say that a motor boat as big as the *Streak* was seen going down the Harlem about eight o'clock, eh, Chick?"

"That's what some of the men around Bradley's told me. Bradley himself did not see it, but he appeared to think that the men who told me about it could be depended on."

"Did they know who was aboard?"

"They say four persons—three men and a woman."

Nick looked quickly at his assistant by the light of the launch's lanterns, and there was an eagerness in his face that told he was beginning to feel hopeful.

"How was the woman dressed? Did you hear?"

"I asked, of course. But all they could tell me was that she had a big dark cloak, and that the hood was over her head."

"Naturally. She would be dressed for comfort on a trip of this kind. She might have had any kind of gown on underneath. What about the three men?"

"One of them was at the wheel. Another looked like a boy, and the third wabbled about as if he didn't know how to sit up in a boat. That was the way they put it to me."

"H'm!"

The detective did not speak again until they were past the Brooklyn Bridge and heading for the open bay.

Suddenly there came a hail out of the darkness, and Nick promptly stopped his engine and waited for a large black craft—something like a tug, only much more trim than the average tug in New York waters, and which Nick could see, by the flickering lanterns, was gorgeous with her polished brass—to draw alongside.

It was a police boat.

"Where are you fellows going?" asked a voice.

"Down the Narrows," replied Nick.

"Hello! Is that you, Nick?"

"It surely is, lieutenant," was the detective's reply.

"Why didn't you say so before?"

It was Lieutenant Lodge speaking, and he made this inquiry in a rather querulous tone, as if he thought Nick had been playing some sort of joke on him.

"You didn't give me time, Lodge," laughed Nick. "Have you seen a motor boat go down the bay to-night?"

"Yes," was the welcome reply.

"What was she?"

"A private boat, with a lady aboard. They said their yacht was in the lower bay, and they were going out to her."

"Did they give you the name of their yacht?"

"Yes. The *Idaline*."

It was difficult for Nick Carter to respond in undisturbed tones: "The *Idaline*, eh?" But he did it.

"Yes," went on the lieutenant calmly. "We've seen her. She's at anchor off Rockaway. Rather a rough place, but she is a big boat, and she can stand a lot of pounding, I should think. Do you know the people on her, Nick?"

"I'm not sure. I think I do. But that isn't the motor boat I wanted."

"That's the only one we've seen," declared Lodge. "By the way, have you heard anything in that Bassett case yet?"

"Nothing of any consequence," replied Nick. "I'll let you know when I get anything definite. Hello! It's coming on to rain. We're going back. If that other launch hasn't come down yet, there would be no use hunting her any longer now. Good night, lieutenant."

"Good night, Nick."

The police boat shot away, around the Battery, and up the North River.

Nick, after waiting a few minutes, until he knew he would be unobserved, sent his craft chugging toward Governor's Island, and so on along the Staten Island shore, bound for the ocean.

"You told them you were going back," remarked Chick. "I hope they won't find us running down the Narrows, instead of going up the East River."

"No fear of that," returned Nick. "Lieutenant Lodge is a good fellow. But he doesn't care to be out on a night like this longer than he can help. Look in that locker and see if there are oilskins there."

Chick obeyed, and at once brought out two oilskin coats and two of the broad-brimmed tarpaulin hats, with a strap to fasten under the chin, known to all sea-faring folk as "sou'westers."

Chick slipped on one of the coats and took the wheel while Nick enveloped himself in the other. Then, when they had jammed sou'westers on their heads and had put their own hats in the locker, neither cared what the weather might be now.

"It's going to be a dirty night, chief," remarked Chick, as he looked about him. "Not a star to be seen, and so much rain you can't make out a light twenty yards away. I hope we won't run into anything going down here."

"No fear," answered Nick.

"We are right in the channel," Nick reminded him. "If there happened to be anything coming along, it might run us down. If it did, well——"

"You mean you've had all of the running down in a boat that you can digest—eh, Chick?" laughed the detective. "Well, we did have a little adventure of that kind not long ago, didn't we. But keep calm! I'll get you there safely."

"Get me where?" was Chick's cynical query.

"To—wherever we are going," answered Nick, chuckling. "You'll see, if you have patience. We've got to catch that launch, and if we don't do it before it reaches the *Idaline*, why——"

"You'll board the yacht again?"

"I don't see what else there is to do," was Nick Carter's quiet rejoinder. "Sit tight, keep a sharp lookout, and say nothing till you're obliged," he added, in a more serious tone.

Swiftly went the *Streak* down the Narrows, until they were between the two forts which show their teeth at either side of the wide opening that is the inner gateway to New York.

They could not see either of the forts from the launch, but Nick knew where they were by the feel of the air. Much fresher now than it had been as they came down the channel, it would have told any one much less observing than Nick that they were going out to the open sea.

The rain was coming down now in torrents—with just enough of a nasty slant to whip their faces under the brims of their tarpaulin hats, and to send streams of water down their necks.

"Suffering blizzards! This is pleasant," grumbled Chick. "I hope we shall overhaul that launch before we have to look for that yacht off Rockaway."

"I doubt whether she is off Rockaway now," returned Nick. "But there is nothing for us but to keep on. Of course, the *Idaline* may——"

He stopped. Easing the engine a little, so that it should not make so much noise, he whispered:

"Listen!"

For nearly a minute they sat there, in the pitchy darkness, the rain dashing against them spitefully, and the spray from the choppy waves breaking over the boat without mercy.

"What did you think you heard?" whispered Chick, at last.

"Hush!"

"All right!" growled Chick inaudibly. "But I'd like to know what we have to look out for."

He soon found out, without any information from his chief.

Suddenly, without noise, a motor boat, rather larger than their own, slid alongside, and a pair of grapplers were flung over the gunwale, holding the two craft together.

Before this was done, however, two men had leaped aboard the *Streak*. As Nick drew his automatic pistol and fired without effect, he was dragged into the other boat, flat upon his back.

The grapplers were released, and the two boats drifted apart. Then the engine of the stranger began to chug wildly, and Nick Carter found himself rushing through the night at full speed, leaving Chick, dazed and almost helpless, behind.

CHAPTER VI.

NICK REFUSES A COMPROMISE.

The capture of the detective can be accounted for partly by the fact that he was so encumbered by the heavy, wet oilskin overcoat that he could not get at his pistol easily.

The weapon was in an outside pocket of his sack coat. Ordinarily, it would have been handy to his grasp. But, covered up as it was, he fumbled at it for several seconds before he could get it into his hand.

"I reckon we'll have to throw a rope around him, shan't we?" asked a voice which he recognized.

"Not necessary, Monk!" replied a man who had taken a lively part in dragging Nick aboard the boat. "He can't get away. If he'll give us his word not to make any fuss, I don't see any use in tying him up!"

The detective's response was to fly suddenly at the speaker, and getting him by the throat, forced him down upon his back."

"You scoundrel!" hissed Nick. "I'm glad you did this. Now I know whom I have to deal with. I thought it was you, Jared Spanner."

"Let go!" gasped Spanner, as he writhed vainly in the steellike grip of the detective. "Monk! Where are you?"

The man who was at the wheel, and whom Nick had recognized as the agile rascal, Lidew—nicknamed "Monk" because of his monkeylike powers as a climber—looked toward Spanner by the light of the lantern, and seemed for a moment uncertain what to do.

A woman, sitting quietly in the stern, wrapped in a large black cloak with a hood—who had not moved throughout the disturbance, as if she had no concern with what the men might do—relieved Monk's dilemma by stepping forward and taking his place at the wheel.

It would have been easy for any one to see that the woman was quite able to manage the boat as well as the man. She did not seem to be at all agitated, but kept the boat cutting across the waves with the slightest turn of her wrists as she handled the wheel.

No sooner was Monk relieved than he jumped on Nick

Carter's back, his long, muscular arms twining about the detective's.

Although Monk could not have overcome Nick Carter, face to face—or in any way at all in the long run—he had the advantage of the detective now.

Nick released his hold on Jared Spanner's throat, and that worthy slid from under and helped Monk to subdue their powerful captive.

"Don't do that!" commanded a feminine voice sharply. "You must not hurt him."

It was Valeria speaking. Nick Carter knew those clear, vibrant tones too well to be mistaken.

"What are we to do with him, then?" growled Spanner. "Bind him!"

"All right! I'm glad we're allowed to do something to make him keep quiet. If he's a prisoner, he ought to be treated like one," continued Jared Spanner sulkily.

The two men had got the detective on his back now, and as Monk dexterously looped a rope around his neck, Nick could not struggle without drawing the noose tighter.

This was an ingenious trick of Lidew's that he had employed on more than one occasion. It enabled him to get other ropes around the prisoner's arms and legs with comparatively little difficulty.

Once thoroughly secured, Nick did not resist further. Instead, he took a survey of his situation and came to the conclusion that it was not so bad, after all.

It was true that he was a captive, and that it might be many a day before he would find himself at liberty. But, on the other hand, he felt assured that he had discovered the persons responsible for the theft of the priceless missal.

Not only had he recognized Mademoiselle Valeria, Jared Spanner, and Monk Lidew, but he saw now that, lying under a tarpaulin, was the form of a man.

The feet of the man under the cover were close to him, and Nick noted that the shoes were large, square-toed, and devoid of the elusive quality known as "style."

"Max Olsen, beyond question," thought Nick. "He would naturally wear shoes of that pattern. They have captured him because they did not know what else to do with him. He knows who robbed Solomon Bassett, and they have to keep his mouth shut."

Nick was lying not uncomfortably in the bottom of the boat, even though he could not move hand or foot, and, now that he was under restraint, he could employ himself in determining what he should do when he got to the *Idaline*.

"I wish I could see that missal," he mused. "It must be in the boat. They have not had a chance to do anything with it. Besides, if I know Mademoiselle Valeria—and I think I do—she would not take all this trouble unless she meant to make it pay her well."

Nick reflected that Valeria had not been successful in her last attempt to raise money illegitimately—by kidnaping people at a Delaware summer hotel—and that she would feel that she must make a grand coup now to put her on her feet.

"She has heavy expenses to meet," he thought. "Running her yacht makes tremendous demands on her. Then she has other things that cost much money. She has allowed herself to become something of a voluptuary, and I suppose——"

"Mr. Carter!"

It was the woman herself addressing him, in a low tone, but which cut through the din of the rain and waves as clearly as a sweet-cadenced flute.

"Well?" he responded.

"I'm sorry for this," she said.

"Why do you do it, then?"

"It is fate!"

Nick Carter could not hold back a derisive laugh.

"Fate, eh? I should call it deviltry, with a large dash of vanity and conceit to make it worse," he rejoined. "You have stolen that book from Solomon Bassett, and you have brought this unoffending old man with you as a prisoner on your pirate craft."

"You take too much for granted," she interrupted coldly.

"I am not taking anything for granted," was his quick retort. "I speak of what I know. Perhaps you will tell me I am not a prisoner myself, with ropes around me. I am not taking that for granted without proof, am I?"

"Yet it would be so easy for you to throw off those ropes and be happier, perhaps, than you ever have been in your life."

There was a tender note in her voice that Nick Carter had heard before on several occasions. Since it awakened no response in his own heart, it only became offensive to him.

"What do you mean?" he demanded gruffly, almost brutally.

"You know. I have told you before. You can become master of my yacht, of the men aboard, of me. You can go to my dominion in the island in the South that you have heard of, but never have been able to find, and live there the state and ease of a king for the remainder of your life."

"With you for the queen, I presume?" he rejoined.

He could not keep the dislike out of his voice, and she caught it at once. It cut her feminine pride and wounded her heart till it brought the inevitable reaction—intense hate.

She could have killed Nick Carter at that moment—stabbed him to the heart without the slightest compunction.

She restrained herself, however, and it was in calm, cold tones that she continued, as if he had not spoken:

"As you are not disposed to make any treaty or compromise with me, I can only go on with my original intentions and deal with you as seems to me most to my advantage."

She turned from him and did not look at him again for the two hours it took them to get to the *Idaline*.

Nick knew they were not off Rockaway. Where they were he could not tell in the blackness.

If it had been daylight, and there had been any landmarks at all, he would have been able to name their location at a glance.

They were some little distance from the yacht when her lights became visible. The rain had ceased to some extent, and their range of view was larger than it had been when he was captured.

Nick was lying in the bottom of the boat, and, of course, could not look about him as freely as if he had been sitting up. But he saw enough to be sure it was really the *Idaline* they were about to board, and he wondered idly how they were going to get Max Olsen and

himself up the sea ladder without unbinding their legs, at least.

When the motor boat had been secured to the ladder, half a dozen men who had come swarming down made short work of the old bookworm.

They picked him up bodily, canvas and all, and carried him up the ladder with as little concern as if he had been a sack of oats.

"Will you walk up quietly if we untie your feet?" asked Jared Spanner, grinning in Nick's face.

It is to be feared that if Nick's hands had been free at that moment, he would have knocked Spanner into the sea without hesitation. As it was, he nodded an affirmative.

Up the ladder went the detective, with two sailors behind and two in front. They were followed by Jared Spanner.

Mademoiselle Valeria had gone on the yacht before anybody else.

When Nick got to the deck, the men surrounded him, some with belaying pins in their hands.

Jared Spanner, after ordering them to hold the prisoner until further orders, disappeared down the companionway.

Nick seated himself on a deck chair, to wait for the next move of the enemy.

CHAPTER VII.

BY WAY OF THE PORTHOLE.

Not more than five minutes passed before Jared Spanner again came on deck.

The sailors stood aside to allow him to face his prisoner, and he did so with a grin that he dared not have shown on his face if the detective had had the use of his hands.

This was nothing remarkable, however. Jared Spanner had a way of doing things which would have meant swift punishment if he had not always been careful to make himself safe first.

"Well, Mr. Carter," he said, with a chuckle, "here we are again, on board the *Idaline*. You are rather a frequent visitor. But this is the first time we have seen you here, so near New York."

"It will be all the worse for you when I get away," observed Nick, in an unconcerned tone. "Go on with what you have to say. You realize, as well as I, that you are nearly at the end of your string. That was my assistant in the motor boat with me, and he knows who it was picked me up."

"I supposed so," smiled Spanner. "But, you see, we do not intend to stay near New York. We shall be away by morning, and then we shall not care what your assistant knows, or how many men he may bring after us—if that happens to be his intention."

"There are faster boats than the *Idaline* about here," remarked Nick.

"Not many, I think," rejoined Spanner. "However, that is not the point just now. We have no desire to make your stay on the *Idaline* any more irksome than is absolutely necessary. I am instructed by Mademoiselle Valeria to say that she regrets very much to keep you bound."

Nick made no answer except an impatient shrug, and Jared Spanner continued, in the same oily fashion:

"You see, Mr. Carter, you are so inclined to be turbulent when you have the free use of your limbs, that we are obliged to take precautions. If you will give us your word of honor not to attempt to escape——"

"Which, of course, I will not give," interrupted Nick.

"I regret that. It would have been so much pleasanter for you. Under the circumstances, I must carry out orders and shut you up. I am willing to confess that, if I had my way, I should be inclined to tie a fifty-pound shot to your heels and drop you over the side."

"No doubt," replied Nick calmly. "But now, if you have quite done expounding your theory as to what should be done with me, I'd like to be taken to wherever you intend to keep me."

"That's easy," grinned Spanner. "But I was going to say——"

"Don't say it. I don't think you have any idea how you bore me with your stupid conversation. It isn't as if you ever said anything interesting——"

"Take him below!" roared Spanner. "And make sure he has no chance to get away!"

He turned his back upon the prisoner and walked off in the darkness. Three of the sailors took Nick Carter down the companionway, through the gorgeous saloon and along a corridor to a cabin, in which Nick found there was already an occupant.

It was Max Olsen, the elderly clerk who had been in the front office of Solomon Bassett's place when the two robberies had taken place.

"You needn't worry about him," said one of the men, with a grin, as Nick stepped into the cabin. "He's nutty. He doesn't know anything. Just let him lie there, and he won't bother you. We've left the ropes around him so that he won't hurt himself."

The three sailors went away, after carefully locking the door.

Nick looked about his quarters, and wondered what would be the outcome. Rather to his surprise, he found that the electric light was in working order, and when he turned the switch, the light came on. He kept it on, and although he felt sure the people in other parts of the vessel must see the light, there was no attempt to put it out.

There were two bunks in the room, one on each side, and surely enough it seemed as if Max Olsen was out of his mind—or "nutty," as one of the crew had so elegantly expressed it.

The man was lying on his back, his eyes wide open and staring unblinkingly upward. He was tied hand and foot, but not tightly.

It might have been the truth that the bonds were on him for his own protection—to prevent his doing injury to himself. Certainly, he did not seem capable of hurting anybody else.

Nick Carter's first thought was to release himself from his bonds. But that was only the beginning of what he felt he had to do.

He meant to get off the yacht as soon as he could, and he believed he could do it. Even then, he would not have accomplished all that was in his mind.

Never did Nick Carter allow the main object of any expedition in which he found himself launched to leave his mind. He was always determined to carry it out, regardless of what side issues might spring up.

"That missal is on board this vessel, I feel sure," he

told himself. "Before I leave the *Idaline*, I shall get it. That is, I shall try to do so. There is always a percentage of chance against any enterprise being successfully accomplished, and possibly that percentage will overcome me in the end. But I don't think it will. I can't believe rascals like these can set all law and right at defiance."

How to get the ropes off his arms? That was the absorbing question of the moment.

He had glanced at the porthole, and it seemed to him much larger than the ordinary opening of that kind on a vessel the size of the *Idaline*.

"Of course!" he murmured. "Valeria had this ship built according to her own designs, and there is hardly a porthole in it that a man of average size could not squeeze through. I know I can get through this one if once these ropes are off me."

It seemed to him as if his hope must lie in Max Olsen. But that unfortunate was not in a condition to help anybody. He was not able to move on account of his bonds, and he certainly seemed to have lost his mind in the unusual conditions that encompassed him.

Nick bent over and looked into his eyes.

As he did so, there seemed to come into them a gleam of intelligence.

"If I could get my hands free, it would not take me long to bring him around, I am sure. It is a case of simple hysteria, and I have drugs in my case that would bring him out of it, with a little other treatment."

Nick had passed his examination as a physician many years before, and obtained his diploma. He never practiced medicine as a profession, but he was competent to have done so had occasion arisen.

"Olsen!" he cried sharply.

The gleam in the eyes increased in intensity, and there was a convulsive movement of the limbs.

Olsen obviously had heard his name, and was struggling to comprehend where he was and what the call meant.

"Olsen," went on Nick, "try to listen to me. You want to get out of here, and so do I. You must cut my ropes with the knife."

"Knife? Ah, yes! Knife!"

This was encouraging. The old man was saying words distinctly for the first time since Nick Carter had been near him, either in the motor boat or the yacht. It proved that his mind was beginning to work toward normality.

"I will show you the knife. You must take it out of my pocket."

"Pocket? Where?" faltered Olsen, after a pause, during which he seemed to be laboring hard to bring his thoughts into orderly sequence.

Nick stepped close to him, and managed to indicate his right waistcoat pocket by turning up his thumb in that direction.

"Do you see? In my waistcoat pocket?" he asked.

"Of course, I see," returned Max Olsen, rather indignantly. "Don't you suppose I know a pocket when I see one?"

The fact that he was disposed to be a little angry was a good sign. It gave Nick more encouragement than anything that had gone before.

In a few minutes Olsen had so far recovered as to lift the knife out of the detective's pocket, and, under Nick's direction, he cut the rope around his fellow prisoner's wrist.

As Nick got his hands free, he took the knife from Olsen and released him, also.

"Now, Olsen, do you understand all I am saying?"

"Yes. I have been in a sort of daze. But my mind is clear now. I can tell you how the missal was stolen."

"Good! But wait a moment. We can talk just as well in the dark. I'll switch off this light. If you hear anybody coming, lie on your back, as you were before, and put the ropes over you so that you will appear still to be bound unless they should examine you very closely—which they are not likely to do."

"Capital!" ejaculated Olsen. "I have read of that sort of ruse in some of the books that I used to be fond of when I was a boy. I'll do it."

"That's right. I'll do the same," returned Nick.

He saw Max Olsen dispose the ropes about his legs and arms so that they might seem tied in case any one inspected them casually. Then he turned the ropes about his own wrists, and switched off the electric light.

"Now, Olsen, how was it? But talk very low, in case any one should be outside the door. You can't be too careful when you are in a fix like this."

It took Max Olsen nearly half an hour to let Nick know just what had happened in Solomon Bassett's place that afternoon.

It is not necessary to follow all the details of the narrative. Suffice it, that Olsen told a connected story, which bore the impress of truth upon the face.

The man calling himself John Holmes—it must have been he, because no one else was in the office—had stolen behind Olsen while the latter was bending over some books at his own desk, and had pressed to his nostrils a drug-soaked handkerchief, causing him to lose his senses instantly.

That was all Olsen could tell. He had a great deal more to say. But it was only conjecture, and Nick could conjecture without any help.

It all led to the same inference—that John Holmes had gone to the inner room, overpowered Solomon Basset, and taken the cover of the missal.

"The missal must be on this yacht, Olsen," whispered Nick Carter. "Are you willing to help me get it?"

"Of course I'm willing," was the prompt reply. "And I should like to get a chance at that fellow Holmes. I would kill him without compunction. He tried to do that to me. For all I know, that may be his intention now."

"You will have to take some risk if you come with me," the detective reminded him.

"I don't care for that," declared Olsen, his blue eyes snapping. "Why, how do you suppose I come to be on board this yacht? What do you think took me on their motor boat?"

"Never mind," interrupted Nick. "You can tell me that later. I am going through that porthole. Can you swim?"

"That is the only form of physical exercise I take," answered Olsen. "That and walking. I have swum from the Battery to Coney Island on a wager. At least, some others wagered. I did it because I wanted to do it. The money that was paid to me for doing it was not my incentive."

If there had been any light in the cabin, a strong look

of admiration would have been seen in the detective's eyes. He was not much surprised. It was no secret in certain circles that Max Olsen was one of the best amateur swimmers in New York.

"Very well!" was all he said. "I'll wriggle through this porthole first. When I am gone, you follow. We will swim around to the ladder, and watch for an opportunity to get aboard. Once there, we will try to find the missal."

"If there are not many people about, we ought to be able to do it without much trouble, I should think," declared Olsen.

"There will be trouble, of course," returned Nick. "But I believe it can be done if we have any luck at all."

"Where do you suppose the book is?"

"We'll talk about that later," said Nick. "Get ready! I'm going!"

It was somewhat of a squeeze for Nick to get through the porthole with his clothes on. But he accomplished it in the end.

As he dropped quietly into the water, chancing to land on the crest of a wave which seemed to have come up to meet him, he was pleased to see that the rain had stopped.

The waves threw him gently against the smooth hull of the yacht. Then there was a slight splash, and the head of Max Olsen bobbed up beside him in the water.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FRUITLESS SEARCH.

The plunge into the sea finished the work of revival for Max Olsen. As he came up near the detective, his mind was perfectly clear, and it delighted Nick to note that he seemed not to know the meaning of fear.

This did not strike Nick as remarkable. He had met so many students who exhibited irrepressible intrepidity when brought into a tight place, that he was quite prepared to find this quiet-spoken man a hero when called upon to be one.

"Swim to the ladder, Olsen," said Nick, in a low tone. "Get on the platform, at the bottom, and wait there till we decide what to do."

"Very well. The ladder is on the other side, isn't it?"

"Yes."

The yacht was still at anchor, and it was comparatively easy to swim around it, dark though it was.

"We'll go by the stern," decided Nick. "I remember once being cut down by a yacht like this when I happened to get in front of her. The *Idaline* is at anchor now, but I have known her to start off without warning."

Max Olsen took little notice of all this. In fact, Nick had been talking more to himself than his companion.

The two men swam around the vessel, and Nick made a start for the ladder.

He uttered an involuntary ejaculation of disappointment.

The ladder had been pulled up and the gangway closed.

"What are we to do now?" asked Olsen.

"We've got to get aboard," was Nick's firm reply. "Follow me."

He swam to the bows of the yacht, where two anchors were out, the vessel pulling hard at them in the strong tide.

"Let me go first," directed Nick. "When I am on deck, I'll whistle softly to you. Give me an answer, and then come up."

"I don't believe I can whistle," protested Olsen.

"Very well. Then call out "All right!" but not loudly. "All right!" responded Olsen. "Like that?"

"That'll do," returned the detective, with a smile that the other, of course, could not see. "Be sure not to do it any other way, or the whole scheme might fall through."

Nick climbed the chain of one of the anchors as nimbly as even Monk Lidew could have done it.

When he got to the hawse hole, through which the chain cable passed, he had to make his way to the gunwale by catching at anything that would give him a handhold.

It would have been easy for him to miss his grip and tumble backward into the sea.

But he did not do it. In another minute he was standing on the ledge that ran around the vessel level with the deck, where he took observations.

In a minute he saw that all was clear forward, and that only two men seemed to be on deck, well aft.

Leaning over the gunwale, he whistled down to Olsen, and immediately there came to him a feeble bleat of "All right!"

"Can you make it up the cable, Olsen?"

"Of course I can. I've climbed ropes before."

Max Olsen proved himself as good as his word. He showed that a man can be a student, and still be fairly good physically. It did not take him much longer than Nick to gain the ledge where he could look over the gunwale.

"Let me give you a hand," offered Nick.

"Don't need it," was the short rejoinder.

And he didn't. With an agile jump, he was over the side of the ship and crouching by the side of the detective.

"Wet?" asked Nick, smiling.

"A little moist," replied Olsen, with an appreciative chuckle.

"Wring yourself out as well as you can, and creep along in the shadow of the bulwarks. If you are attacked, strike out good and hard. That is your only chance, remember. You can't get away."

"I haven't had much experience in that kind of thing," confessed Olsen. "But I'll do what I can."

The two men loafing about the deck, who were supposed to constitute the watch, were not very vigilant. They saw no reason for it, probably.

The yacht lay off the Jersey coast—a considerable distance from Rockaway, as Nick subsequently discovered—and there was nothing to be feared in such peaceful waters so long as the yacht's crew behaved itself.

"Down the companionway!" whispered Nick.

He and Max Olsen stole down the wide stairs, and the former pushed the double doors of the main saloon a little way.

With a stifled ejaculation, he let them close and put a warning hand on Olsen's arm.

The doors were made to close without any sound, which was fortunate for Nick Carter.

When he pushed them open, he saw, not more than a

dozen feet from him, a graceful young woman, bending over some letters and other papers, on the solid oaken table, under the light of a green-shaded electric lamp.

The woman was Mademoiselle Valeria, and she was so absorbed in her letters that she might not have looked up even if the detective had made some noise in opening the doors.

Nick had only a glimpse of her, but he could not help being impressed with her ethereal beauty, under the soft electric glow. Her dress was well chosen—at it always was—made of soft, clinging materials, with fluffy lace at the voluptuously rounded throat and nestling under the dainty chin. Her clear-cut, patrician features were outlined delicately, and the soft hair sprayed about her forehead in bewitching disorder.

The detective noted all this with the pleasure that an artist finds in a beautiful picture, but without any warmer emotion. He had other interests that took up all his time and thought. While he respected women, that was as far as his regard for them had ever gone.

"We can't go through the saloon," he thought, as he drew back from the door. "But there's another way around. It's just as well that she is not in her stateroom. I should not have known exactly how to proceed in that case."

Taking Olsen by the hand, he led him to another narrow door which opened into a corridor giving access to several staterooms.

There was another door into this corridor from the saloon. But, of course, with Mademoiselle Valeria sitting at the table, that way was closed to them.

"Do you suppose the missal is there?" asked Olsen softly.

"It may be. Don't talk," was Nick Carter's response.

The door of Mademoiselle Valeria was unlocked and there was no light within. Nick entered, drawing Olsen with him.

"Stand at this door, inside, and give me warning if you see a woman coming."

"A woman? What about a man?"

"A man won't matter," rejoined Nick impatiently. "This is Mademoiselle Valeria's stateroom, and she is the only person who would be coming in. Any man in the corridor would be only passing. Now!"

He turned away, and directing his flash lamp upon the safe, turned the handle, in the faint hope that it might be unfastened.

To his joy, and considerably to his surprise, the door yielded and he was able to swing it open.

The sight of a number of papers lately disturbed, and a half-open drawer containing documents of various kinds, explained to him why this was so.

She had taken out some letters she wanted to look at, and had not troubled to lock the safe, because that would have meant being obliged to unfasten it again when she should return.

With the thick outer doors open, it was a simple thing for Nick Carter to examine all the drawers within. He had instruments in his pocket which enabled him to laugh at ordinary locks.

Flash lamp in hand, he worked quickly. In less than five minutes he had opened all the drawers in the safe and examined their contents.

He found the jewelry which he had once had in his possession, thinking it had been stolen from Mrs. van Dietrich, but which he now knew was the property of Valeria herself.

This he put back at once. It was not what he sought.

"It isn't in the safe," he announced to Olsen, in a low voice. "She must have hidden it somewhere—perhaps not in her own cabin at all."

He made hasty search, but without result. There seemed to be no doubt that the missal was not in that room.

There was one alternative, which, however, he hesitated to take. That was to surprise Valeria where she sat alone in the saloon, gag her, and make her show him where the book had been hidden.

No sooner had this suggested itself to him than he discarded it as too brutal. Though he knew Valeria was unscrupulous in most things, and might even give orders for him and Olsen to be murdered if they did not escape from the yacht, he could not bring himself to do what prudence might have commanded.

Standing still for a moment in the cabin, his flash light turned upon the open drawer of a bureau in which he had been turning over various dainty articles of feminine ornamentation while hunting for the priceless mass book, he was startled by a sharp cry from Olsen.

Mademoiselle Valeria was standing in the doorway, regarding him with blazing eyes.

For a second no one spoke. Then the girl walked slowly into the cabin and pointed a white finger at the detective.

"This ends any sentiment I might have entertained for you, Mr. Carter," she said coldly. "I did not think you would intrude into my private cabin."

"No place is private to the law when a crime has been committed," was his quick rejoinder. "Where is that missal?"

Before she could reply—if that had been her intention—Max Olsen shouted warningly:

"They're coming!"

With a bound, Nick Carter gained the door. Pulling Olsen through, after him, they dashed along the corridor and gained the companionway before the four men who were coming down the narrow passage the other way could get to them.

Nick had seen that two of the men were Jared Spanner and Captain Latell, commander of the *Idaline*, while the other two were ordinary members of the crew.

Once on the deck, Nick found his way barred by four or five husky sailors, all full of fight.

CHAPTER IX.

NIP AND TUCK, NO DECISION.

Without any definite idea except that he must force his way through the cordon of men, Nick Carter hurled himself at the sailors.

Right and left shot out his fists, and two of the men were down immediately.

Then came a pleasant surprise to him, for Max Olsen was laying about him with a vigor that no one who had known him only as the quiet, bent-backed, absent-minded clerk in Solomon Bassett's establishment would have supposed possible.

It must be confessed that Olsen did not display much pugilistic skill, and his attacks and defenses were utterly

devoid of science. He simply fought with "git-thar" earnestness, and it is wonderful how effective that sort of fighting can be.

Max Olsen's blows were not hard enough to knock any of the sailors down, but it rocked their heads back, and when he aimed at them, he always reached his mark, wherever that might be. This is a large part of success in boxing, as everybody knows.

The noise attracted reinforcements for the sailors, however. Several men came piling out of the forecastle and rushing aft.

Nick and Olsen both fought more actively, and soon Nick Carter had sent the three sailors who had remained on their feet, flying in either direction.

"Look out, Olsen!" shouted the detective. "Follow me!"

He had seen that no one was on the bridge. With a bound he was up the steep ladder, and on the bridge, looking for a weapon of some kind that would enable him to hold the position against assault.

"Here's an iron bar I picked up!" called out Olsen, who was already by his side. "If you can get something else, we'll hold them off without much trouble."

Max Olsen was full of the ardor of battle now. It was the first time he had been in a real scrap since he was a boy, as he told Nick afterward, and he was enjoying it to the utmost.

The bar he had picked up was an iron belaying pin—a formidable weapon in the hands of a determined man—and he swung it so viciously that he beat away Jared Spanner and Latell before they could get their foot on the ladder.

"Come on!" squeaked Olsen. "I can lick the whole crew!"

But it was only for a moment that Olsen held the men at bay. As he reached down with his belaying pin, aiming at all who came near, several of the men, under quiet orders from Latell, brought up a long spar.

With this they charged vigorously at the truculent Olsen. He was obliged to give way.

Jared Spanner grinned malevolently as he saw Olsen retreating, and he was the first man to gain the bridge when the spar had cleared the way.

Latell was close behind, and several sailors, including those who manned the spar, came piling up.

Nick sprang to the aid of his companion. Snatching the belaying pin from his grasp, he swung the weapon at Spanner, regardless of the spar, which lunged past him, and brought the bar down on the rascal's shoulder.

Jared Spanner fell upon the bridge, and missing his footing at the edge, went tumbling down the ladder, into the arms of one of the seamen below. It was only his being caught this way that saved him from a very ugly fall.

"Keep at it, Olsen!" shouted Nick. "Help me to get hold of the end of this pole, and we'll shove them back."

It was not a simple thing to do. But both Nick and Max Olsen were desperate. Their blood was up. They felt that they could thrash the whole ship's company, as Olsen had loudly proclaimed just before.

They managed to grasp the spar, and, for a few moments, so determined were the efforts of the two defenders of the bridge, that it seemed as if the issue might favor them in the end.

But their advantage was only temporary. Overpowered by sheer weight of numbers, they were pushed steadily along the bridge till they were at the other end. Then there was nothing for them to do but to go down the ladder there to the deck.

"Now, run!" Nick cried, in a lower tone than he had been using. "We are not far from shore, and it may be that help will come, for there has been an awful racket on this ship. If we can't do any better, we'll have to try and lower a boat and get away like that."

"There's the motor boat that they brought us in, hanging at one side," suggested Olsen.

"I see it. But that's altogether too big and cumbrous," replied the detective. "We might cut the lashings from one of the smaller boats, and drop into it. The oars are in them, ready for use."

"We'd be more likely to drop into the water," remarked Olsen.

"Well, if we did, we should have to swim a little. That wouldn't bother you, Olsen—would it?"

"You've seen how much swimming bothers me," was the answer.

By this time they were off the ladder. Scuttling along the deck on the opposite side from their pursuers, and they took advantage of the deep shadows to keep out of sight.

Nick determined very soon that it would be hopeless to try and cut any of the boats loose. They could not expect to cut them down evenly, and if they had one end hanging from the davits, the chances were a hundred to one that they would be caught before they could loosen the other.

"We'll have to keep away from them and trust to luck," he whispered. "I have been on this yacht so often that I know my way about her. We can hold them off for hours, I am sure. It will be daylight in another hour or two. Then we can see where we are, and probably get away before they can stop us."

"But what about the missal?" asked Olsen.

"It may be on this vessel," answered the detective. "But we shall have to get a regular search warrant and a force of police to find out. After all, we are not sure."

The two were well forward, where a hatch sheltered them.

Men were looking for them up and down the deck.

"Hello!" suddenly exclaimed Nick, in an eager whisper. "Look there! Over to the right!"

"I don't see anything," confessed Olsen.

"I do. Can't you make out a square shadow on the water. Now! It's on top of the waves! Look hard! Don't you make it out?"

"Yes," returned Olsen. "I see it now. What is it? A raft, or a piece of wreckage?"

"It's a boat! Yes—a motor boat! I got a good view of it then! It must be——"

There was no time for further exchange of views.

With a howl of triumph, Jared Spanner, holding a lantern with a strong reflector, came sneaking along the deck. He turned the full strength of his light upon the two fugitives.

"Ah! I have you now, Mr. Carter!" he shouted. "Come on, men! We've got them trapped! Shoot if they try any monkey business on you! Take them, dead or alive!"

"There's your John Holmes!" remarked Nick to Olsen. "What do you think of him?"

Whatever Max Olsen may have thought of the foaming, raving Spanner, he made no reply. Instead, he kept his eyes fixed upon the shadowy boat, which he also recognized as a motor boat.

"That's a motor boat," he said, as if half to himself.

"I see it!" responded Nick absently, for he was looking at the men surging along the deck, and calculating whether it would be possible to beat them off.

"If we were on that motor boat we might get away," muttered Olsen.

An idea came to the detective, as he overheard this low-voiced remark.

"Olsen!"

"Well?"

"Are you willing to risk it?"

"What?"

"To jump overboard and try to get to that launch?"

"I'll do anything you say," was the calm response.

"Come on, then! We will have a hundred chances to one in our favor. We are almost sure to be picked up. If we are not, I don't believe we are more than two or three miles from shore. I believe I can make out land to starboard, and it looks like the coast below Fort Wadsworth."

Nick Carter said all this hurriedly, as he sidled up to the side of the deck.

"Ready?" he asked shortly.

"All ready!" came the reply of the matter-of-fact Max Olsen.

Placing a hand on the gunwale, Nick vaulted over and stood on the narrow ledge. Then, poising himself for a moment, he jumped out as far as he could, striking the water feet first.

Hardly had he come up and begun to swim when he heard the voice of Max Olsen close by.

"I jumped almost as quickly as you did," was Olsen's quiet remark.

CHAPTER X.

NICK BEGINS TO SEE THE END.

"Here you are, chief! Come in out of the wet!"

It was Chick calling out this, and Nick had not been swimming three minutes when the motor boat ran up alongside and stopped, while his assistant joyfully helped him in.

Max Olsen was soon by the side of the detective, close against the engine, and both were well covered up with coats and tarpaulins, to keep them from becoming chilled.

"How is this, Chick?" asked Nick.

"Nothing," was the reply. "I followed the other motor boat as well as I could, but there was so much rain that I could not tell where I was for a while. Then the rain quit, and I picked up the yacht."

"And you've been around here ever since?"

"Yes. I heard the racket on the yacht, and I would have come aboard if I'd known how to get there. Then it struck me that you would be sure to beat their game, and that I could do more good by having the motor boat ready when you should be ready to go ashore."

"Very sensible idea!" put in Olsen, from the depths of his tarpaulin. "You couldn't have done anything much up there. There's a score of them, I should estimate."

"Including John Holmes," added Nick.

"John Holmes?" repeated Olsen. "I didn't see him."

"I pointed him out to you. I told you his real name was Jared Spanner. He was the fellow who told the others to take us dead or alive."

"That wasn't John Holmes," declared Olsen positively. "Didn't look like him, and hadn't his voice."

"Are you sure about that?" asked Nick, in astonishment.

"Positive."

"Thunder and lightning!" interposed Chick, from his place at the wheel. "I thought it was settled that Jared Spanner was the John Holmes we are after."

"Seems not," returned Nick. "He must have got somebody else to represent the clerk for Solomon Bassett. Well, we shall have to lay out a new campaign, and the next time it will have to win. Get us to New York as quickly as you can, Chick. Crowd on all the power you can. I'd sooner blow up than be long on the way in these wet clothes."

Chick did crowd on the power, with the result that Nick Carter was in his own house and in dry clothing in much less time than it had taken them to make the outward-bound trip.

Max Olsen went home, with the understanding that Nick would call Solomon Bassett up on the telephone and tell him his employee would be at work again the following day.

"No, I'm not going to bed, Chick," announced Nick, as he and his assistant sat at breakfast. "You may, if you like, for I have some investigations of my own to make, and I don't suppose I shall need you for a while."

"What do you take me for, chief?" rejoined Chick, rather indignantly. "I can sit up as well as any one else, I reckon."

"Very well, then. Stay here and listen for the telephone bell. I shall, perhaps, call you up. I am going to see Solomon Bassett. That will be better than telephoning."

Before he went, however, Nick sat in his library, to enjoy the first comfortable smoke he had had for many hours.

He lighted one of his perfectos, and, as he puffed, he studied in silence the scrap of blue-black cloth that had been found in Solomon Bassett's outer office.

After a while he took out his microscope, and, with his flash light to help him, scrutinized the cloth from a new angle letting his glance take it in sideways.

"Strange!" he muttered. "It seems hardly possible. And yet I have long since learned that it is indeed the unexpected that happens when one is running down crime."

"Chick, I am going now" he announced as after carefully placing the scrap of cloth between the leaves of his notebook he got up and moved to the door. "Don't move till I come back. I mean don't go out."

Chick nodded. He saw that a new idea had come to his chief in the last few minutes but that it was not the time to ask what the idea was.

Nick took a taxi as soon as he got to Fifth Avenue, and directed the man to drive to the Priestman Building, in Forty-second Street.

"Stay here till I come back," he directed shortly, as

he hurried inside. "I may be fifteen or twenty minutes, or less."

"All right, Mr. Carter."

The detective took no notice of the driver calling him by name. He was used to people recognizing him and letting him know that they had done so.

He found Solomon Bassett in his back room. The outer office was closed. The old gentleman had told his patrons that he would not do any business for a week, at least.

They all knew of his loss, and were not surprised at his temporary retirement. Mr. Bassett was not in trade to make money.

"What have you found out, Nick?" asked the old man, when they were inside, with the doors closed and secured. "Are you on the track of my missal?"

"I believe I am," was the calm reply.

Solomon Bassett jumped from his chair and seized the detective by his two elbows, as he panted breathlessly:

"Do you really think you are going to get it back for me?"

"I hope so."

"Who has it?"

"I am not sure yet. I cannot say anything at present. But I have certain clews in my hands that I intend to follow up. They may lead nowhere."

"And you'll catch the scoundrels who stole the book—the woman?"

"We are not sure it was a woman, are we, Mr. Bassett?" asked Nick, with a curious smile. "Are you sure it was the woman who pressed that drug to your face and caused you to lose consciousness?"

"There was no one else in the room," was the rejoinder. "Isn't that proof enough?"

"We shall see," said the detective. "I came in to tell you that I was still working on the case, and that I might be able to report success in the end. But it is all up in the air at present. Keep that in mind."

"If I ever caught sight of that woman again, I'd make her give up the missal, or I'd choke her to death right there!" shouted Bassett.

"Don't do anything of that kind," smiled Nick Carter. "It would interfere with the lady's breathing apparatus, and probably would not get the missal back to you, anyhow."

He went down to the taxicab and gave the address in Fifty-ninth Street, where Max Olsen lived.

The landlady whom he had met before smiled on Nick Carter when he presented himself and asked for Mr. Olsen.

"Would you believe it, sir? Mr. Olsen came home this morning, and in such a state you never saw."

"How was that?"

"He was soaking wet. He hadn't a dry thread on him."

"That was too bad. Did he tell you how he got into such a condition?"

"Said he had fallen out of a boat. I guess he was in the water for hours, judging by his clothes. He said he had gone out for a ride with a friend, and that a squall upset them near Coney Island, and that they had a hard time saving themselves."

The landlady, talking volubly, led Nick into the parlor, where she begged him to sit down while she went up to see whether Mr. Olsen was ready to receive him.

"He was in bed a little while ago, and I told him to stay there all day. He is liable to take a cold that will lay him in his grave. He is not such a young man, and he can't afford to go falling into the water."

"You say he is in bed?" asked Nick.

"Yes. I made him go there as soon as he came home. He is a bachelor, you know, and if I didn't look after him, he wouldn't get any care at all."

"I see."

"So I ordered him to get into bed. Before he went to bed he was to put all his wet clothes outside his door, shoes and all, and I would have them dried.

"And did he?"

"Yes. I have them all down in my kitchen, drying near the range. The kitchen is full of steam, but I can't help that. Mr. Olsen must have something to put on when he gets up."

"Hasn't he any clothes but those, do you suppose?" asked Nick, smiling.

"Of course he has," was the rather indignant response. "But he always wears those that are wet at his business, and I don't suppose he'd feel comfortable in anything else. That's why I'm hurrying to get them dry. Some of them want mending, too, but I must leave that to some other time. I'm too busy to do anything with a needle and thread to-day."

"Will you go and see whether Mr. Olsen can see me?" asked Nick, breaking into the landlady's garrulity as soon as he saw an opening.

"In a moment," she answered. "Let me see. Your name is Colonel Pearson, I believe?"

"Yes."

She came down in a minute or two, with the information that Mr. Olsen was sitting up, and that he would be pleased to see Colonel Pearson.

The detective found Max Olsen in a dressing gown and slippers, sitting in a rocking-chair and reading a catalogue of an art sale soon to take place. He smiled a welcome and put a thin white hand out as Nick Carter entered.

"I'm glad to see you, Mr. Carter," he said, when the door had been closed. "The landlady said it was Colonel Pearson who wanted to see me, and I had to think a minute before I remembered that you call yourself Colonel Pearson to some people. I did not think you would be out to-day. You must be nearly exhausted."

"I was a little tired. But I have had a bath and good breakfast, and am in dry raiment. That has freshened me up considerably. I have just come from Mr. Bassett's."

"Indeed?" cried Olsen, with sudden interest. "How is he? Does he feel his loss as strongly as ever?"

"I am afraid so. But I was able to cheer him up a little."

"How?"

"I told him I thought I should soon restore the Raymond missal to him, and that I would see to the punishment of the thief."

"Do you know the—the—thief?" asked Olsen, in surprise.

"I think I do."

"Poor girl!" exclaimed Olsen. "She is only a girl, from what I saw of her. But, of course, if she is a criminal, she cannot expect anything but punishment. There was a man in it, of course—this John Holmes.

Do you think you will be able to bring it home to him?"

"I shall catch the man, whoever he is. Perhaps it was not John Holmes."

"That's so. A false name, of course. But you'll get him, all the same, I guess?"

"I am practically sure of it," was Nick Carter's quiet reply.

CHAPTER XI.

DRAWING IN THE LINES.

When Nick left Max Olsen's boarding house, after some more general conversation with the elderly art clerk, he went to the nearest telephone and called up Chick.

The detective had been careful to go to a place where there were telephone booths, so that he could talk privately. He had some rather startling news to communicate, and it would not have done for everybody to hear what he was saying to his confidential assistant.

"Good Lord!" came back over the wire from Chick, when Nick had said a few hurried words. "What am I to do?"

"Listen, and I'll tell you. Be sure that you do not let a hint of what I have told you get out."

"Did you ever know me to leak?" demanded Chick.

"There might be a first time," was the rejoinder. "Now, I want you to watch a certain place, and don't let the man who lives there out of your sight. Get that?"

"I've got everything except the place I'm to watch," answered Chick. "That's rather important, it seems to me."

"So it is," said Nick. "So important that I think I will rush down home in my taxi and tell you. Then you can take the same taxi to the place. Good-by."

Nick rang off, jumped into his taxi, and told the man to make as good time as possible to his house in Madison Avenue.

In less than ten minutes the detective was facing Chick in his library. In two minutes more, Chick, with the name and address in his possession, was in the cab, hurrying to the house he was to watch.

No sooner had Chick disappeared than his chief went out and walked swiftly downtown. His destination was police headquarters. He made his way straight to the private office of Lieutenant Lodge, and was warmly welcomed.

"Well, Nick, what have you got?"

"I haven't anything yet," was the reply. "But I will have. Now, I want a little help from you."

"In this missal affair?"

"Yes. That's what I am working on," returned Nick. "I want a police boat to gather in that yacht, the *Idaline*."

Lieutenant Lodge almost jumped out of his chair.

"What has the yacht got to do with this business?"

"I don't know. But I believe the woman who owns the yacht and directs her is concerned," was Nick's answer. "There is a man aboard named Jared Spanner. Get him."

"Spanner? I believe I know him. Wasn't he mixed up with something in Chicago once, and didn't I have him under surveillance for a while?"

"That's the man."

"Very well. I'll get him."

"Then that's all," said Nick, as he got up to go. "You'll go after the *Idaline* right away, of course?"

"Yes. I'll see that there is no time lost. We want that missal."

"You'll find the yacht a little way down the Jersey coast, within sight of Fort Wadsworth. At least, that's where she was this morning. Better send as many men with the police boat as possible. They are a hard bunch on the Idaline."

"The harder they are, the more fun our men will have in showing them where they get off," laughed the lieutenant, as Nick departed.

It was rather unlike Nick to leave so apparently important an end of a case to the hands of other people. Chick, for instance, wondered why his chief did not go down the bay in the police boat to superintend the capture. But he did not say anything.

Chick was still on guard when the man he had been told to watch came out and walked rapidly away.

Nick Carter came up to his assistant at the same moment.

"Follow him," were Nick's instructions. "If he gets into communication with any one from the yacht, get the nearest uniformed man to take them both to a police station?"

"That will be hot stuff," remarked Chick.

"I intend it to be hot stuff," was his chief's quiet rejoinder. "Do not lose sight of him."

"Strange how events shape themselves!" mused Nick, as he strolled slowly along in the bright sunlight. "I see thousands of people about me, and any one of them might have been the thief who took that missal. I see a dozen women from where I am walking now who would pass for the one that went into Solomon Bassett's office. After all, there is not much difference outwardly between a thief and an honest man—or woman. No wonder it is so hard to catch rascals in this age."

The detective was in a philosophical mood. He often was when pleased with the way a case was going. And he was much pleased with this one. He believed he would have the Raymond missal in his hands before nightfall.

Turning over his next procedure in his mind, it was half an hour before he had finished his stroll. Then he knocked at the door of a house where he expected to clinch a theory he already had formulated with regard to the theft of the missal.

He was in the house about a quarter of an hour. When he came out and called a taxi, he had a parcel wrapped in thick brown paper.

He kept the parcel in his arms in the cab until he arrived at his own home.

Going straight to his library, he locked himself in, pulled down the window shades, and lighted an extra-powerful electric lamp, with a strong reflector, which he used only for special work and when he wanted the best light he could procure.

"If this proves to be what I think it is," he murmured, "I must work quickly to get hold of the thing itself. But I don't think this will take me long, anyhow."

He unwrapped the paper parcel, and placed what had been in it on his table, under the strong light.

The article was a frock coat, of blue-black cloth.

In one of the skirts there was an ugly tear, showing

the black lining underneath. The tear was some six inches long, and two wide.

"It seems hardly worth while to go any farther than to match the piece I have with the rent in the skirt," murmured Nick. "But I want to make my identification complete."

He took from his pocket the scrap of cloth that had been found in Solomon Bassett's outer office and fitted it into the place in the coat where there had been a piece torn out.

It fitted exactly.

This was not all, however. Nick had another test that he intended to apply. He regarded it as important as the matching of the piece to the ragged hole.

Taking his microscope, he went carefully over the coat, especially on the sleeves and down the front of the lapels. Then he looked at the scrap torn away in the same manner.

He took more than half an hour to make his examination.

Once he used his penknife to scrape a little of the nap off the lapel. This he placed on a sheet of white paper and examined narrowly though the microscope.

"No doubt of it," he said softly. "There is enough of the stuff to show that the man who wore this coat had done a great deal of that work. The restoring of old books and paintings both call for the use of this substance, and it is impossible to prevent some of it sticking to the clothes of the operator. I don't think I need go any farther."

He telephoned down to Joseph, his butler, in the hall, and told him to get a taxi.

When the vehicle came, Nick was driven directly to Solomon Bassett's place.

He left the coat there, still wrapped up in its brown paper covering.

"What's that?" asked Bassett, eying the parcel curiously.

"Exhibit A," responded the detective. "I wish you would not open it for the present, unless you feel that you cannot wait till I come back."

"Oh, I can wait," grunted Bassett. "I'm not so curious as all that. I see it isn't my missal, and that's all I care about."

"No, it certainly is not the Raymond missal," returned Nick. "While I am gone, will you call up Max Olsen? I think he may help us in our investigations now that we have got to this stage."

"I dare say he can," assented Bassett. "He knows more about my business than any one else, and he was here when the robbery took place. I wonder whether he is at home."

"He was at home this morning," said Nick. "I saw him."

"He hadn't heard anything about the missal or the thieves, I suppose?" asked Bassett.

"He did not say he had," replied Nick. "We had been together all night."

"That's so," exclaimed the old man. "You told me. I had forgotten."

Nick Carter went out, and Bassett telephoned Max Olsen in the meantime.

Olsen was at home. He went up to his employer's office at once.

It was half an hour before Nick came back. He was accompanied by his assistant, Chick, but the latter remained in the outer office, while his chief went inside to confer with Solomon Bassett and Max Olsen.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST LINK OF THE CHAIN.

When the door had been closed and fastened, Nick Carter looked at the other two men, and began, in a calm, pleasant tone:

"I have something to tell you, gentlemen, that I hope will be pleasing, and that I am pretty sure will surprise you."

"Go ahead, Nick!" interrupted Bassett impatiently. "Tell us. Have you got the missal?"

"I'll answer that question a little later," was Nick's reply.

Max Olsen started up and looked at the detective with something that seemed to be amazement, but in which there were other emotions combined. He did not speak, however.

"Have you got the person who stole the Raymond missal, then?" went on Solomon Bassett.

"Yes."

Clear and incisive came this monosyllable.

Olsen and Bassett both left their chairs, as if they would lean over close to the detective. He waved them away, and they sank again into their seats.

"Where is the thief? Have you got him under arrest?"

"Not yet."

"But you will arrest him?"

"That depends."

"On what?"

"On what you desire to do," replied Nick steadily.

"I'll answer that right now," broke out Solomon Bassett. "I certainly do want them arrested. That woman nearly killed me with her infernal drugs, and if she has a man helping her, he is as bad as she is. Don't think I am going to show any mercy, because I am not."

"Will you bring out that parcel, Mr. Bassett?"

Without a word, Solomon Bassett went into his private room and came out with the brown-paper package entrusted to him by Nick Carter before the latter went out.

"You did not examine it, Mr. Bassett?" remarked the detective.

"No. I was not particularly interested when I knew it was not my missal," was the reply. "So I felt I could wait until you returned."

"Just as well, perhaps," observed Nick, as he proceeded to untie the string with extreme deliberation.

Soon he had the parcel unwrapped.

He held up the contents in front of the two men.

"Did either of you ever see this coat before?" he asked.

Solomon Bassett looked at the coat, and turned away with a shrug.

"That coat might belong to anybody," he remarked. "I don't see a distinctive mark about it. I have seen scores of coats just like that."

"What do you think of it, Mr. Olsen?" went on the detective, turning to that gentleman.

"I don't think much about it," replied Olsen, in a low voice.

"Did you ever see the coat before?"

"Never."

"You are sure."

"Quite."

"Nonsense, Olsen," broke in Bassett sharply. "Don't be so positive. It's a bad habit. You may have seen a coat like that. I don't say I never saw it before—only that I can't be sure."

"That's what I meant," amended Max Olsen. "I may have seen it, of course. But I don't recall it."

"You remarked just now, Mr. Bassett," continued Nick, still on his feet, the coat hanging from his left hand, "that there were no distinctive marks on this coat. You were mistaken. There are several marks, and they are decidedly distinctive."

"What are they?"

"One of them is more pronounced than any other. Look!"

With an abrupt movement, he swung the coat around so that the rent was immediately in front of Max Olsen.

Olsen started back as if the tear had been the open mouth of a wild beast.

Nick turned the coat toward Solomon Bassett.

"You see, Mr. Bassett, here is the rent from which that scrap of cloth we found in the outer office was torn by the latch. You remember, we looked at the scrap together."

"I remember," was Bassett's reply. "Do you mean that you have the owner of this coat?" he went on excitedly. "If you have, perhaps you have the man who stole the missal."

"I know I have," answered Nick. "I have got the man." Then he called out through the door communicating with the outer office: "Chick! Be careful of that door."

Olsen was on his feet now, his eyes fastened on the coat. Evidently he shared the excitement in the office to the full.

"You say you have the man?" queried Bassett.

"Yes."

Now it was Max Olsen who spoke, although the voice did not sound like his own.

"You have the man who owns that coat?" he panted, as he pressed his long, white hand to his breast. "You have the man? Aren't you possibly mistaken?"

"I am not mistaken," declared Nick positively.

"Then where the deuce is the man?" bellowed Solomon Bassett. "What is the use of all this talk? Where is he?"

Nick Carter threw the blue-black coat upon the chair behind him, and looked slowly from Solomon Bassett to Max Olsen and back again. Then, with a quick movement, he extended his arm until his pointing finger was only a few inches from Olsen's pallid face.

"That is the man!" he shouted. "The man who owns that blue-black coat, with the six-inch tear in it, is Max Olsen!"

For fully half a minute there was dead silence.

"Do you mean to say," began Solomon Bassett, "that this is Mr. Olsen's coat?"

"Yes."

"This is ridiculous," cried Olsen. "There are thousands of coats like this in New York. It is not my coat. How could it have come into possession of Mr. Carter?"

"That was simple," explained Nick coolly. "I got it from your landlady in Fifty-ninth Street. She had been drying it, and I persuaded her to let me have it—for a consideration."

"But, Mr. Carter, how do you account for this, when we were sure it was the new clerk, John Holmes, who was guilty?"

"Let Mr. Olsen explain that."

"I have nothing to say," was Olsen's sullen rejoinder. "Mr. Carter has chosen to take this extraordinary course. Let him say what he likes. When he has finished, I will refute all of it that relates to me."

"Go on, Nick," requested Bassett. "Tell us what you know about John Holmes, if you know anything."

"Max Olsen was the head clerk in your outer office, and you had told him to keep John Holmes if he suited. If not, Olsen was at liberty to discharge him."

"Yes. That was the arrangement," conceded Solomon Bassett.

"Then that's the answer," said Nick. "Olsen discharged John Holmes, so that there should be nobody in the outer office but himself."

"Absurd!" bleated Olsen.

But his livid face was evidence against him.

"Do you mean that Olsen actually gave me that drug?" demanded Bassett. "Don't you remember that it was a slim, white hand that suddenly came in front of my face, and which was the last thing I remembered before I lost consciousness?"

"A slim, white hand?" echoed Nick Carter.

With a bound he was in front of Olsen and had seized his right arm in a steellike grip, holding the hand in the light of the electric lamp.

The hand of Max Olsen was as slim and white as any woman's.

"Why," gasped Bassett, "That looks like——"

"It is," interrupted Nick. "It is the slim, white hand that did the work. I know, because I was a victim the second time."

Max Olsen savagely fought to get away.

But the detective held him until Bassett had had a long look. It convinced him that this was indeed the white hand that had flashed in front of his face and taken away his senses when the missal was stolen.

"But where is the missal?" cried Bassett. "If you have the man, Nick, you ought to have what he stole."

"Ask him," returned Nick, pointing to Olsen.

"Where is it, you—you scoundrel?" roared Bassett, shaking his fist at the man who had for so long been his trusted and confidential employee.

Olsen did not reply. Instead, he sat back in his chair, his arms folded, and a look of sullen resolve on his face, as if he had made up his mind to say nothing, no matter what might befall.

Nick Carter looked at him. Then, throwing open the door communicating with the outer office, he called sharply:

"Chick!"

"Hello, chief!"

"Come in!"

Chick entered the inner office. In his arms was a large flat parcel, wrapped in brown paper, like that which had been around the blue-black coat.

Nick Carter took the parcel from his assistant and was about to place it on the table.

But Solomon Bassett did not give him time to do this.

With a shriek of anxiety and hope, the old art collector and bibliophile snatched the parcel from the hands of the detective, and began frantically untying the string that held it together.

Nick Carter helped him by cutting the strings.

The next moment the paper had been torn off, and Solomon Bassett flung himself upon his precious missal, weeping and laughing hysterically.

"Back again! Back again!" he mumbled incoherently. "Back again! Never to go out of my hands again!"

"See if it is all right," suggested Nick Carter.

Hastily the old man looked at it. He saw that the gems were in their places, as they always had been, and that the missing cover was on again.

"The same thief took them both!" he exclaimed.

"Of course!" assented Nick. "He wanted the book complete, and it was not hard for him to get the cover that had been torn off. Only, when it was necessary for him to come back, he found me here, too, and he had to give us both a dose of that deadly——"

He broke off suddenly and rushed at Max Olsen.

But he was too late! The old clerk had passed into his mouth a small tablet, and when Nick Carter turned the dead face to the light he caught a faint odor of peach blossoms.

"Cyanide again!" said the detective quietly. "That must be a most powerful combination he hit on. He is quite dead. He was evidently well versed in chemistry, or he might accidentally have killed you and me when he was after that missal."

"But who would have thought that Max Olsen could do such a thing?" cried Bassett. "It seems unbelievable. How did you come to suspect him, Carter?"

"I cannot tell you in detail," replied the detective. "But it came to me by degrees when I saw how flimsy was the story you told, and how poorly it hung together."

"I didn't know my story was flimsy," objected Bassett.

"Of course, you didn't. But I could see where it was full of holes. In trying to fill up those holes, I gradually came upon the truth—although I will admit it was not till to-day that I began to think Olsen was the man. When once I had seen that he had a coat with that peculiar tear in it—which was when we were together in the launch, coming back from the yacht—I got on the right track."

"Well, anyhow, I'm so thankful to have the Raymond missal back that I do not care for much else. I wish that was moved out of the room."

He pointed to the body of Max Olsen, which lay back in a heap in the large chair he had occupied while alive.

Nick Carter covered it up with a large table cover that draped a sofa at one side of the room. Then he telephoned police headquarters and asked for Lieutenant Lodge.

"Hello, lieutenant! This is Nick Carter. . . . Didn't get the *Idaline*, eh? How was that? . . . Oh, they had gone early this morning? . . . What's that? Caught a little fellow they call Monk Lidew? What does he say? . . . Put him through the third degree? . . . Yes. . . . Oh, he confesses that Jared Spanner was after that missal, and that he got Mademoiselle Valeria to take the job? . . . It was Monk who drove her limousine? Yes, I knew that."

"Did you?" interrupted Solomon Bassett. "I wish you'd ask why Olsen was a prisoner on that motor boat. I can't understand why they should make a prisoner of a man who was one of their gang."

"Hold the wire, lieutenant!" called out Nick. Then, turning to Bassett, he answered: "I can answer that. Jared Spanner tried to take the missal away from him. Afterward, when he couldn't get it, he was going to hold him a prisoner on the yacht until he would give it up. Mademoiselle Valeria had nothing to do with that. Wait a minute."

He turned to the telephone again.

"Look here, lieutenant! We've got the missal. . . . Yes. You needn't yell like that! We've got it all right," went on Nick, laughing. "But there is something else. The man who stole it—Max Olsen—has just committed suicide in Solomon Bassett's private office. I wish you'd have somebody come and take the body. . . . Monk Lidew? Yes, you'd better hold him till I see him. I want to know something more about Mademoiselle Valeria. . . . You'll have officers and the coroner up to see the suicide right away? Good! . . . Yes, I'll tell Mr. Bassett. Good-by!"

* * * * * * *

"I don't know that I much mind Mademoiselle Valeria getting away this time, Chick," observed Nick Carter, a few days afterward. "She did not make anything out of her Delaware speculation, and she was not to blame for trying to steal the Raymond missal—if she really did try, which I doubt."

"She was up there, looking at it," said Chick. "And she was posing around New York under another name."

"That's true. But her real object may have been something entirely apart from the missal. All we can do is to keep a sharp lookout for her if she ventures here again. I don't think she will do it in a hurry."

"It seems to me it is about time you put an extinguisher on that young woman for good," grumbled Chick. "And that blackguard, Spanner, as well."

"I intend to do so in due time, Chick. But there is nothing gained by trapping a fox unless you are sure you can hold him afterward."

And with this bit of philosophy, Nick Carter lighted another perfecto. He smoked it to the end in silence.

THE END.

"Found in the Jungle; or, Nick Carter's Siamese Puzzle," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 127, out February 13th. It is some time since you have read of the doings of the great detective in a strange land, and Nick's solving of the tangled mystery of crime, that you will read of in this forthcoming story, is as clever a piece of detective work as has ever been credited to Nick Carter.

BARON VON MUNCHAUSEN.

The captain of a West Indiaman, who could shoot a tolerable longbow, told in company the following:

"We were coming over the Banks of Newfoundland, when we hooked an immense shark, and there appeared a difficulty in getting him aboard. I went down into the cabin for my pistols, and just as I was going to fire one of them at him it slipped out of my hand into the sea.

Soon after the shark broke the line and made his escape. Well, gentlemen, coming home this voyage, about the same latitude, we again hooked a shark, and with some difficulty he was hauled on deck. As they were cutting him up, I was surprised at the report of something like a pistol shot; and, gentlemen, would you believe it, this was the identical shark which had swallowed my pistol, and it now went off in consequence of a stroke of the knife with which they were ripping up his belly. You may think, probably, that I have used a license too often indulged in by travelers, and fabricated this story, but my mate and all my people, if they were here, would tell you the same."

RUBY LIGHT.

By BURKE JENKINS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 120 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XXII.

STARTING THE BREAK.

We three men—Stroth, Stevens, and myself—ate almost in silence, broken only by a query or two. Stella was still sleeping, her father said.

"You are sure, Stevens, we can't make the start before morning?" There was anxiety in Stroth's voice. "It is just possible that Pawlinson didn't exaggerate his preparedness to my daughter."

"My opinion is, sir, that he was exaggerating," replied Stevens. "That is, on his being able to sail within an hour or two. He couldn't even provision a vessel in the time since he tumbled to the fact that we have made for this old spot of yours. Of course, we could cast loose just as we are now, under engine; but we'd better wait to step the mainmast, in my opinion."

"Make it daylight to-morrow, then, Stevens. I guess you are right."

"It'll be all the better, sir." And with that, the indefatigable little officer once more sought the deck, where never once had the bustle of rigging ceased.

Stroth turned to me suddenly.

"We had better have our talk in my stateroom, I think," he said.

"Certainly," I agreed, following him.

He closed the door, indicated a chair, passed me the cigars, then seated himself before me in easy attitude.

I struck a light, and waited.

"Grey," said he slowly, "just what do you think of me, anyway?"

It was entirely unexpected, of course, and I simply couldn't meet it promptly. He smiled whimsically at my stuttering attempt.

"I believe you're about as much puzzled about me as I am myself," he went on evenly. "Well, now, let's see; shall we call it queer? Or odd? Or—er—well, eccentric? Eh?"

He sprang to his feet, and stood right over me as he measured out these words.

"Or is it worse than eccentric?" he added.

And once more I saw that old, hawklike forward crane of the neck. I knew what he meant, but I simply couldn't find a reply.

Nor did he seem to expect one, for he shifted the topic immediately as he reseated himself before me, and asked, in an entirely different tone:

"Do you really get the solace, the satisfaction, out of tobacco that you and other smokers seem to?"

"Why, yes," I answered, as I sent a mouthful of blue smoke eddying upward. "It's a great comfort. You don't smoke yourself, ever?"

"No," he answered shortly, almost bitterly. "I've tried it all—smoke, drink, drug—all! Why, I even got Saki to show me the weird ways of his opium pipe. But it's not for me. But do you know what mine is, man?"

That fire was coming in his eyes again, as once more he sprang to his feet and began pacing the floor. Again I kept silent; again he expected no answer, as he continued:

"The zest of events! Real events—happenings; adventure—danger—sparkle, in the monotony of it all! You get me? Man, I tell you I have to have it! Oh, I can worry along a bit, a little while, prosaically—taking my pictures, sailing a pleasure cruise; but then comes the surge over me for the real thing."

He stopped short before me once more.

"Pawlinson told you that I was the head of that gang that has been looting the Sound villas?"

"Yes," said I simply.

"Well!" He stopped a second, then shot out: "I am!"

I let little show in my features, but I hated to hear him say it. Then his defiant note smothered itself almost into a groan:

"But, Grey, I must tell you—you, the man who is to be my daughter's husband. I cannot help it! When that thing swirls over me, *I must!* You understand? I find it hard to word it at all, but you see, don't you?"

"I am beginning to," I replied wonderingly, as I looked at him. Then I added: "You will allow me a question, sir?"

"Certainly."

"What is this criminal organization of which you are the head?"

"Very much as Pawlinson has told you. But I try to put into it as much good quality as it can worry into its sorry excuse for existence."

"Meaning?" I questioned.

"Meaning that it is always a rich man that suffers; and more, the plundering rich."

"A rather threadbare excuse," I ventured.

"Perhaps you are right," he replied, taking no umbrage. "But, anyway, you'll admit it's a bit better than to rob the under dog."

"Maybe," I admitted. "But now, sir; from now on?"

He caught my meaning immediately.

"From now on, Grey, the organization ceases to exist. I have already started the break."

"A little late, isn't it?"

"Maybe it is, Grey," said he quietly; "maybe it is a little late. But look here, boy!"

He drew me up to a place in front of him.

"This I owe in justice to myself. Listen"—and he let an instant's silence underscore his words—"I could not help it! Do you believe me?"

No longer did the fire blaze in him—that half-mad excitement that had set him pacing a moment gone. Instead, I saw the woe of a man that had wrestled with something stronger than himself.

"I believe you, sir," said I, and I could swear I saw tears in his eyes. "And I'm with you, sir, for Stella's sake," I added.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A GRIM PRECAUTION.

Thrown into the mesh of tangled events as I was then, I had little time to digest the remarkable confession. At such times the mind seems to take for granted many things that would ordinarily strain credulity.

I simply knew that I had thrown in my lot with the *Ruby Light*. My course was decided; nor did I once regret it.

Oddly enough, I slept splendidly till added bustle on deck woke me at the first streaks of day. I had caught up on my sleep, and felt fit as a fiddle as I went up on deck.

Stroth was there ahead of me, and we were both quickly joined by Stevens, who had, from sheer necessity, been forced to catch a nap before the start.

Somehow, in her stunted rig of shortened mast, the *Ruby Light* had caught to herself a new tone; a sort of girding up of the loins for struggle; a sturdy, stocky defiance.

And it was almost in grimness that she began to nose her way from the shelter of the little island, and point for the inlet and the open sea beyond.

Her engine was working like a clock, and Stevens was making sail as we went, for an early air was beginning to stir.

The sun was just lipping its way above the line when we slipped through the inlet, and the brightening day made us all crane expectant and anxious heads to westward.

From that quarter would come trouble or relief.

At first the water looked a clear, unspotted expanse, but then the keen old eyes of Steve caught the meaning of a speck, a growing speck; for the breeze was picking up.

"A sail, sir!" grumbled the old fellow to Stroth respectfully. "An' she's a-bringing of the wind with her."

It didn't take a half hour to make us realize how much the *Ruby Light* had lost in speed by her shortened rig. The wind helped her little, though it had managed to pick up in strength considerably.

But the more it blew, the worse it proved for us. The other schooner's full-sized rig was telling by the minute. Besides, as old Steve had said, she was coming down with the wind—a distinct advantage.

That she had already, in turn, sighted us, and was in pursuit was soon evident, for her course altered some three points, hitting an imaginary tangent to our course, as it would be ahead. This, of course, brought us a better view.

"Know her, Steve?" snapped Stevens.

"Aye, that I do," vociferated the old bo's'n; "that I do, fer there's no mistakin' the cut of that there 'jumbo.' 'Tis the *Shadow*, out o' Fulton Market. Three trips I sailed in her m'self, an' a spryer bit o' timber ain't in the fleet."

The prospect looked bad, and grew worse by the minute; for, with every rag of light canvas Stevens could set to our reefed spars, we were barely exceeding our engine speed. Indeed, once or twice our booms swung inward, sails fluttering.

"There is only one thing that would help," said Stroth quietly.

"And that?" I queried.

"And that is a flat calm; for I would stake *Ruby's* engine against any auxiliary on the coast." Then his manner changed to the businesslike. "But meanwhile, Stevens, it will probably be well to bring it on deck."

He thumbed over his shoulder to a spot just forward of the foremast. I asked no question while Stevens left us, going toward the forward hatch.

Five minutes or so thereafter, four fellows grunted to the strain as they lifted "it" from the hold.

I have never seen a more wicked-looking machine gun, but I said nothing.

It was as if the air devils, from their vantage point of the invisible, were enjoying the sport of it all. For, not a quarter hour after we had begun to prepare for trouble, the wind fell back to an oily calm.

"The fates are with us a bit, it seems," murmured Stroth to me; "though," he added meaningly, "with Stella not aboard, I'd view the matter in another light."

"So?" said I inquiringly.

"I mean that I have had about enough of him," he replied in explanation, as he nodded back toward the pursuing sail. "But it can wait. Meanwhile, the calm."

It was enigmatically put, but I thought I understood him.

He certainly had not exaggerated *Ruby's* ability under power, though; for, minute by minute, her steady, purposeful pur was widening the distance from the fishing schooner whose "above-water" exhaust was coughing to an occasional "miss."

So things went till about noon, at which time there was a good five miles between the vessels; then came more wind, and our hopes fell to its rising.

For, her light kites bellying to its waft, the *Shadow* picked up half the handicap.

Oh, it was tantalizing! And it kept so for the entire day. I have never seen more "fluky" weather.

Stella appeared at the midday meal. She appeared thoroughly rested, and, when she went with me to the deck, she was her old, vivacious self.

But she started violently when she recognized what was under the tarpaulin that had been thrown over the Gatling to keep its glint hidden till the proper moment. There was no mistaking the meaning of the thing.

"Then it's true?" she whispered tremblingly.

I saw it was best to take a decided stand.

"Stella," said I seriously, "just what is true is not to be thought about now. In fact, neither you nor I had better do even any conjecturing. We are here, and the circumstances are such——" I swept my arm in indication of the *Shadow*, at this particular moment losing on us a trifle.

"But," I added, "in this thing I have joined your father—for your sake; and we'll see it through."

Her way of meeting this was rather odd, though characteristic:

"For my sake alone?" Then I read the wistfulness in the smile, and understood.

"Yes, girl, you are right," I replied, feeling for words. "For your father's sake, too, I believe. I—well—yes; I have come to think a lot of him, too; somehow—I——"

"Good!" she cried, and I liked the ring of her voice, as she kissed me.

Then she gave me another surprise, for her spirits lightened almost to jubilance.

"It's fine, isn't it? Really living!" And the look of positive radiance she swept over the sun-kissed scene of our horizon-bound circle—the foam-lapped wake, the two schooners, cottony clouds; all—harked back to another age, the days of quest, of lure, of battle, and of mystery.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AT HANDGRIPS.

As I said, that day proved one of oddest weather; weather that kept us all on tenterhooks. Widening, then lessening, grew the interval that kept us from bringing matters to issue.

The closest the pursuing boat had ever come had been a bit within an estimated two miles; and that was the distance when the sun set.

Our course had held steadily due south; for, of necessity, in a straight line lay our best chance. Any variance would give Pawlinson a "crosscut."

"Oh, for those extra feet of mast!" groaned little Stevens, when I joined him after Stella went below, twilight having fallen.

"Would have made a difference, eh?" I strove to put lightness into words, though I was beginning to feel the strain of the uncertainty, as I believe all aboard were.

"A difference? Well, rather. We'd have had him hull down in two hours; but maybe, though——"

"Well?" It was Stroth who had come alongside us.

"I was saying, or about to say, that the moon doesn't rise till late," continued Stevens.

"I am counting on darkness to shake 'em off, too," agreed the owner, "though even starlight is bright enough at sea."

"It looks to me, though," I put in, "as though we might look for bad weather after a day like this. It usually follows, I believe."

But I was wrong; at least, wrong in thinking the change would come early; for right up to the time the moon rose the stars shone gem clear.

As a sort of forlorn hope, though, Stroth shifted our course about ten o'clock several points to westward, taking advantage of a momentary thickening of the night; but dawn saw the futility of it. For, back there, dead in the wake, like Nemesis, hung on the gray canvas of the *Shadow*.

But the new day promised early events—and they came. The sun had no more than shown itself when it was smothered in a bank of ugliness.

"Here it comes, but too late!" cried Stevens, who had not quitted the deck in twenty-four hours. "And it'll be a swinger!"

Short-canvased as we were, the *Ruby Light* kept to the sails she was flying; nor did the *Shadow* do more than douse her staysail and balloonер. And she had no more than got these in when it struck her.

Over she went, heeling to the point of "hang on"; then came the foam of waters as they churned up a furrow at her black bows, the wind dead east.

Before we could feel even the strength of the blast ourselves, the space had been lessened to short of a mile.

Then grimness settled itself over Stroth's features, and it was a voice of cold gray that gave measured direction.

"He *will* have it; then let him!" he muttered, and the men, trained to stations, unshrouded the steel menace of the machine gun. I saw a fellow fit a belt of cartridges.

To Stroth's nod, Stevens cried the order to the man at the wheel, who happened to be old Steve.

Over whirled the spokes, and the *Ruby Light* shot up into the wind's eye, canvas slatting. At almost the same second her engine was stopped.

Head to the enemy thus, she bobbed a bit of preliminary defiance, then made her defiance good.

Gr-r-r-r-rr!

It's a wicked sound, and I could hear the bullets thump through sails first, then change the tone to snapping of splinters, as the marksman found his range, and poured the fire on deck house and rails.

But on she came! Nor did a man show on her decks—not a soul but a tall hulk of a figure at the *Shadow's* helm.

At the very second of my own recognition of the man I saw Stroth run forward to the machine gun, and wrench the fellow away from its breech. This, just as a fresh belt of cartridges was fitted.

The muzzle veered as he strove to follow the pace of his mark; then I saw his jaw set as he pressed trigger.

There followed two seconds of the fiendish rattle—a chip flew from our own rail to a lurch, then—silence!

One glance at Stroth's face as he wrestled at the gun's stubborn crank told the story.

The action had jammed!

The vessels were close aboard each other now—hailing distance; and the mockery in the laugh that came to us showed that Pawlinson had tumbled fully to what had happened.

I guess both Stroth and myself must have sensed his intention at the same second. The steadfast oncoming could mean but one thing.

"Rifles, all!" yelled Stevens, catching the drift, too.

It was a pretty sweep, nicely gauged, that laid the fishing schooner alongside us. A momentary lull in the rising storm had helped, but there was plenty of seamanship in it besides.

Then, from hatches fore and aft, they poured from her; bellowed to their moves by the raucous voice of Pawlinson. And over our rail they swarmed, just as he was about to quit the wheel to follow himself.

The next minute lives only in the daze of unreality; though it was a minute of mighty import.

Just how what we did was effected I do not know; but the four of us most concerned acted in such concert that it seemed as if it had been often rehearsed.

The very instant the fight was on, and the rattle of rifles at close range began, I saw Stroth speak sharply to old Steve. Just then, too, I caught Stella to me as, panic-stricken, she sprang from the companionway.

One look from Stroth, and I got his order telepathically.

Frightened as she was, the girl obeyed me instantly. It was no slight leap, even though the schooners were fairly rubbing bilges. But she made it, and landed beside me on the deck of the *Shadow*, clear of all by now; that is all but Pawlinson.

I shot a glance aft, just as old Steve clutched at the wheel spokes of this other schooner. There was a bit of sternway on as he swung the *Shadow's* helm hard over to port.

Then I shifted gaze to what was transpiring alongside the mainmast of this slimy-decked fishing schooner.

Stroth's grip, as he settled it to the neck of his enemy, was terrible.

And, just as the vessels swung clear of each other, they went to the deck together. I sprang to aid, but Stroth was uppermost.

Then, as though it had simply waited for this bit of a curtain riser to be concluded, that casterly gale whipped itself into fullest fury.

Every rag of canvas was wrenched from the spars; but old Steve had managed to get her before it, and he kept her there.

CHAPTER XXV.

WITHOUR WARNING.

We bound Pawlinson to the mainmast, and the briny spume of an occasional slopping sea matted his tousled hair, and ran down his ugly face.

Not a single word came from him, though his eyes spoke it all.

And the storm proved the veritable "swinger" that poor little Stevens had promised. By mid-afternoon the sea had risen to a height I had never seen equaled.

I managed to get Stella to go down into the grimy after cabin, and we made sorry coffee over a smoky little stove. But it helped somewhat; and, after tucking the girl into one of the unsavory, but welcome, bunks, I again sought the deck.

Old Steve still held the wheel, controlling every bucking lurch that threatened to broach us; the force of the wind was, if anything, increasing.

Then I heard Stroth, heard him even above the fury of the weather's whipping.

Invective I have listened to in my time, but never anything like that. Tuned to the devil's glitter in his eyes—that old, terrible, mad light—the words poured out, as he paced a feverish sentry step right in front of his bound captive.

"From a cur of the gutter I brought you. You learned—yes, you learned the game well. The evil of it all was in you by birth; but my rules of the game were beyond you! To mask it, though, you put your lying face to its best use, and you won way with me. Then, when we broke back there in Maine, was I fair? More than fair! I even suggested the Washington service for you, for you have ability of a sort! I even let you gain your reputation by nabbing those petty crooks that played the game against lowly toilers. Not my kind of game, and against my orders. But your next move? Scurvy, foul-lipped blackguard, shall I go on?"

Never, even in his worst moments of mantling rage, had I seen Stroth like this; and how Pawlinson was able to face him at all amazed me. But he did, and his features carried equal venom.

And all the while the gale roared about us; the schooner creaking, groaning and lurching to every blast.

Night found us still hurtling into the west; and this time there were no stars.

Then came the catastrophe!

There was absolutely no warning; for, to leeward as they were, even the sound of the breakers was denied us.

I went flat to the deck at the first strike; but, as the stumbling schooner thumped her shell higher and higher up the shallowing bottom, I gained footing, and sprang for the cabin.

Next moment I was swimming; and swimming easily, even with my burden, for Stella hadn't lost her head.

For perhaps twenty minutes it lasted; though, of course, it seemed longer. Then my feet touched. And it was sand.

I doubt even that the schooner would have suffered, had the storm not been of such really terrific violence.

We dragged ourselves up the beach, and there dawn found us, chilled, but with eager eyes on the waters that lay between us and the wreck.

And the gaining light showed us what we wanted to see; not in the water, but farther up the beach. So, to old Steve's beckoning, we staggered over to the hollow behind a sand dune.

There lay Stroth, just as the old boatswain had laid him after the rescue; and a cut, deep, and with a fringe of blue, followed with almost mathematical precision the line of his eyebrows.

To Stella's cry I bent car to his chest.

"Good!" I said simply, and she smiled her hope.

Then I turned to old Steve.

"Pawlinson?" I inquired.

For answer the old sailor simply pointed out over the falling seas, to where the *Shadow*, sunk now in the high tide, showed but the upper half of her spars above water.

"He war tied ter the foot of th' mainm'st, y' remember," said he.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE EXCITING RAYS.

At sunup we spied the oddest kind of a knocked-together shack which topped one of the sand dunes like a wart. And at about the same instant, its inhabitant lifted the old, frayed canvas doorway, and caught sight of us.

Then he came running toward us, and I have never seen a more weirdly grotesque figure. Even in the severity of the moment I couldn't suppress a chuckle, which Stella echoed.

The most noteworthy feature of the make-up was a huge pair of round-lensed goggles, the broken frame of which was lashed together with a bit of bale wire.

For clothes the little, bewhiskered man before us wore the strangest mess I have ever seen upon human form. There was not one article intact.

But those eyes that peered near-sightedly over us showed remarkable intelligence, and the language that began to ripple from him in a low, well-modulated voice completed the incongruity.

"Why, you have, indeed, come to mishap. Well, well!" And he caught sight of the wreck for the first time.

"May I ask where we are?" I inquired, in sorry facetiousness.

"About as far from anywhere as I could get," said the little man. "And yet the tangled events of adventurous existence have come upon me even here. Here, where I came to study!"

"To study?" I queried, in astonishment.

"Aye, sir, to study; to concentrate. You understand me, I trust—concentrate. You comprehend? You look intelligent."

I bowed to the back-handed compliment; then he spied the form of Stroth below us on the ground; and his manner changed abruptly to the most businesslike and practical.

"Ah, here we have some work. Sir," he continued to address me, "you couldn't have wrecked your vessel at a better point. For I see this gentleman needs immediate attention."

A nod at old Steve told him the plan, and together we carried Stroth to the hut, where he was laid on a crude bunk.

Immediately the strange little fellow set about working over Stella's father, while we gazed about the ramshackle room we found ourselves in.

Books—books everywhere; Books of every description. Loose-leafed manuscripts, a telescope, a microscope, a prism or two, were all mixed into violent jumble, with no sense of order, along with the maddest riot of color. Cloths some two feet square there were, of every hue, every conceivable shade. And all this scattered and strewn about carelessly, along with a rusty frying pan, a kettle with a hole in it; while a string-hung side of "sowbelly" marked the larder.

In spite of my bedraggled, soggy state, I couldn't help catching up a volume or two, and reading the titles. I thought I recognized a familiar binding, and I was right. It was a copy of James' "Psychology." Then followed Hudson's "Psychic Phenomena." The last, a blue book, proved Ingalese's "History and Power of Mind."

But I was called from further investigation by a sharp exclamation from the professor, as I thenceforth called him.

"Remarkable!" he cried, as Stroth's eyes opened, at first tentatively, then to steadier, though distinctly bewildered, gaze. And then I, too, noticed the peculiar glaze that came over them.

"Odd—odd—odd enough!" cried the little man. "But," and he looked up at Stella comprehendingly, "your father will be all right in twenty-four hours. And I shouldn't wonder"—his voice lowered, and he appeared to be speaking rather to himself than us—"I shouldn't wonder if he were then a bit more right than he has been for some time."

What he meant by this I didn't know till later.

He gave Stroth something that put him into healthy sleep almost immediately; then he busied himself about the comfort of the rest of us. It was crude enough hospitality, but how welcome! And, at his advice, we decided —all of us—to postpone the ten-mile walk to the nearest settlement till the morrow.

Whether the professor had dumped a bit of the same drug into the lentil soup I don't know, but certain it is that we all slept well into the next forenoon.

Then it was, and before we started on the tramp, that the little professor beckoned me and Stella from the hut, and led us a distance down the beach. Here he broke out abruptly:

"Tell me his life—his kind of life, that is. All about it! How was he accustomed to spend his day? Most interesting case. I'm glad you were wrecked. Most interesting."

At first I didn't understand what he was driving at, but Stella seemed to understand immediately.

She began to recount the life of her father had been leading; and, as she worded it, it took on a prosaic enough sound—the go-as-you-please life of a wealthy gentleman of leisure.

This didn't please the professor at all, and he snapped out sharply:

"Oh, yes, yes, yes! Of course, of course! But the other thing! Those other times, I mean! Tell me about them!"

In amazement I looked at the girl, who returned my gaze. Then I put a question into my glance, and she nodded acquiescence—though I could see the subject would pain her.

I described those "other times," those times of forward crane of neck, the voice, the leap, and flash to the eyes—the roar of action that came over Carl Stroth.

"Ah!" chortled the little snipe of a man delightedly, as he rubbed his hands briskly together in satisfaction. "Ah, now we're getting it! I knew I was right!"

Then he raised his voice almost to a yell as he whirled on us:

"But the cause? The cause?"

Our bewilderment seemed to anger him almost; then he lowered to a more even tone:

"Have you told me all of his usual day—his prosaic day? Come now, all!"

"All!" cried Stella, laughing in spite of herself at his eccentricity, "unless I put in that hobby of photography; those hours he spent in his dark room, fussing over some new effect."

The result of this disclosure upon the professor was electrical.

"What? And you forgot to mention that before? Here—wait here a minute—both of you."

He ran back to the hut at full speed, and returned, thumbing a book in search of a passage.

Finally he thrust it out to us, and we read:

"The lowest force in psychic man is that which we designate as his distinct animal propensities, and these are red in their manifestation or vibration. When the emotional nature is in the ascendancy, man's color is red, and according to the intensity of his emotions is the color intensified."

"There!" cried the professor. "And now, my dear" the little man's tone actually took on a mothering quality—"when your father feels himself again, I would suggest that you keep him from subjecting himself too often, or too long at a time, to the exciting rays from a ruby, dark-room lamp. For, you see, ruby light is red!"

THE END.

NATIONAL GREETINGS.

"How can you?" That's Swedish.
"How do you fare?" That's Dutch.
"How do you stand?" That's Italian.
"Go with God, señor?" That's Spanish.
"How do you live on?" That's Russian.
"How do you perspire?" That's Egyptian.
"How do you have yourself?" That's Polis
"How do you find yourself?" That's German.
"Thank God, how are you?" That's Arabian.
"May thy shadow never grow less." That's Persian.
"How do you carry yourself?" That's French.
"How do you do?" That's English and American.
"Be under the guard of God." That's Ottoman.
"How is your stomach? Have you eaten your rice?" That's Chinese.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Dog Benefits by Man's Will.

Bequests for the maintenance of his dog and horse were made in the will of William A. Leckie, of Joplin, Mo., which disposed of an estate worth $50,000, accumulated in mining operations.

Two dollars and a half a month was given to Leckie's dog Lassie, and stipulation was made that his twenty-three-year-old driving horse Tony should be maintained by his estate. The bulk of the property was left in trust to the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations of Joplin. Leckie had no relatives.

His Inner Works Misplaced.

Frank Kepler, an employee of the General Electric Company, of Schenectady, N. Y., went to a doctor recently to have a couple of fractured ribs treated, and this is what he learned: His heart is on the right side; his liver on the left side instead of the right, and nearly all the rest of his vital organs are mixed up, as though some one had stirred him up with a spoon.

The doctor got so interested he almost forgot to treat the ribs. Kepler has always had good health.

Minstrel Song Writer Dies.

John Frank Martindale, of Greeley, Iowa, known on the minstrel stage as Frank Howard, the man who wrote three of the most beautiful ballads of his generation: "I'll Await My Love," "When the Robins Nest Again," and "Only a Pansy Blossom," has just died, at the age of sixty-four years. Greeley was his boyhood home.

Untold thousands have sung his songs, and other thousands have been moved to tears when he sang them himself. Howard was a tenor, with a fine voice, and was long a stage comrade of Lew Dockstader, Chauncey Olcott, Willis Sweatman, and others. He sang last in Chicago four years ago, at a benefit.

Town of 2,000 With no Dogs.

Mount Ayr, Iowa, claims the distinction of being slightly different from other towns in this State because of the fact that it is dogless. Whether it is owing to the fact that the people do not like dogs, or the dogs do not like the people, is not known, but certain it is there are none in Mount Ayr. The town is the county seat and has about 2,000 inhabitants.

Thirty-four Sailors Die in Blazing Ship.

Wrapped in flames and with the sea about her ablaze from the cargo of gasoline she was carrying, only two men of her crew of thirty-six escaped death Tuesday when the British steamer *Vedra* piled on the shore near Barrow, England, during a heavy gale, broke up, and was consumed.

The two men rescued were severely burned while swimming through the flaming sea to a tug.

So suddenly did the fire break out when the vessel grounded that only four of the ship's company had time to reach her weather side. These were the chief engineer and three sailors.

A number of lifeboats came upon the scene, but were unable to aid the men imprisoned in the forecastle, whose screams could be heard above the roar of the flames.

The *Vedra* was bound from Port Arthur, Texas, and is a total loss.

Fit Burglar to the Window.

Two men, negroes, James Porter and Harry Beaufort, were being tried before Judge Leary, at Minneapolis, Minn., on charges of burglary. Porter was found guilty. The jury based their verdict on the belief that Porter could crawl through a window seven by eleven inches in size; and that Beaufort couldn't. Beaufort was acquitted. Judge Leary sentenced Porter to an indeterminate sentence in the Stillwater Penitentiary.

Both defendants were well-developed men, although Beaufort was the larger. The evidence against them was largely circumstantial until Assistant County Attorney Flynn called upon Chester Lorenz to describe the size of a window through which, evidence had indicated, two burglars entered.

Mr. Lorenz was positive the window was no larger than seven by eleven inches, and upon the mystic numbers of "seven" and "eleven" the defense rested its case, with the result that the verdict came seven-eleven for Porter.

Strange Case for Dentists.

Edward Sowards, who lives on the Black Mountain, a few miles north of Big Laurel, Va., is in a serious condition owing to the abnormal growth of his teeth. About five months ago he discovered that his teeth were becoming longer and more prominent. He consulted a dentist, who advised him to have them trimmed. He did so, and soon after they began to grow faster than at first. He had them sawed off again, but they continued to grow. The best doctors were called in but none can tell the cause of this strange affliction. At this time his teeth are almost an inch long and are turning backward in his mouth, so that eating is difficult, hence there are fears that the disease may result fatally.

To Spend Winter in Woods.

Cold weather has no terrors for L. H. Gorrell, ninety-two years old, of Iola, Kan. While others spend zero weather indoors, close to the stove, Gorrell will be living in a tent on the bank of the Grand River in northern Iowa. He is going to spend the winter in hunting and trapping. He came in from his camp recently, bringing with him furs valued at $125, accumulated in three weeks. Gorrell is as active and as healthy as a man half his age.

"I keep young living outdoors and exercising," he said. "Plenty of pure air, freedom from worry, and temperate habits maintain a physical poise impossible under other conditions. I take my ax into the woods and chop my own firewood, prepare my own breakfast, and enjoy it. My traps frequently lead me over twenty-five miles of rough country, but that does not exhaust me.

"With a log fire glowing before my tent, I sleep soundly

between my blankets. I have not touched tobacco for thirty-five years, and I have never tasted intoxicating liquor. The only stimulant I need is a drink of the life-giving oxygen, abundantly available to all of us, and a cup of cold water. Give me a drink of pure water and the man beside me a drink of whisky, and I can stand weather that would freeze him to death."

Gorrell has lived in Allen County nearly fifty years. He came to Iola in a prairie schooner and pitched his tent on the spot where the courthouse now stands, in the center of the public square.

Dreams He's Back With Army.

Dreaming that he was again in the army and in action, John Hoffman, of Camden, N. J., formerly a soldier, jumped out of bed, seized a rifle, and fired at the "enemy." The charge lodged in his wife's foot. When his wife awakened him and informed him that he had shot her, Hoffman refused to believe her until he saw the wound. Then he ran from the house and summoned an ambulance.

Kicking Calf Kicks Trigger.

While Pierce Ricketts, of Gillette, Wyo., was wrestling in the box of his wagon with a calf that didn't want to be hauled away to the butcher, the calf kicked the trigger of Ricketts' gun, which went off, the bullet lodging so deeply in the calf—not the kicking calf—but the calf of Ricketts' leg that it could not be located.

In his pain and excitement Ricketts liberated the calf—not his wounded calf, but the kicking calf—and the kicking calf, following the example set by the gun, also went off, and—just like the bullet that lodged in Ricketts' calf—the calf of his leg—cannot be found. The gun, notwithstanding the fact that it went off, was found lying in the bottom of the wagon.

Ask Ricketts about the remarkable affair and he will probably exclaim: "Oh, blow that calf! Inquire: 'Which calf?'" and—well, the questioner had better make a quick start to the tall timber.

Chase Moose in Automobile.

A quiet family automobile drive developed into an exciting chase over the road between New Duluth, Minn., and West Duluth, when Mrs. George Little sighted a big moose in the streets of the latter place. They chased it part way to New Duluth and then back toward West Duluth, as far as the western outskirts, where the animal broke away from the road and headed across the hill toward Procto.

When the party saw the animal, which Little described as a cow moose, weighing at least 1,000 pounds, it was grazing in a field. The Littles stopped their machine to watch the moose. The animal, after looking the auto over carefully, started on its long hike.

Cat Beats Big Hawk.

This is a story of a furious fight on the farm of Charles Forrester, at Klinesgrove, Pa., in which a big maltese cat put to flight a big hawk and saved her kittens from being devoured by the bird of prey.

Taking her brood from a manger to the barnyard for a sunbath, the old cat stayed with them to protect them. A hawk swooped down on the little family and seized a kitten. Like a flash the mother cat was on the back of the hawk. Then a royal battle began. Feathers flew and they fought hard. Finally the hawk tore loose and disappeared in the air. The kittens were counted, and it was found that the mother cat had won the battle.

Aviator Squirrels Raid Attic's Stores.

A squadron of flyers has laid siege to and captured one stronghold in the heart of the residence district of Huntington, Ind. The besiegers have appropriated a winter's stock of supplies, and those assailed have capitulated.

The squadron comprises a number of flying squirrels. A winter's supply of black walnuts was scented in the attic at the home of Clinton Butler, an Erie engineer. An opening into the attic was discovered and possession taken by the squirrels.

The scampering of the squirrels was heard by the Butler family during the day, and their chatter disturbed the sleep of the family at night. For a time, it is said, the members of the family thought the house might be haunted, but final investigation resulted in solving the mysterious disappearance of the nuts and the nature of the marauding forces. Then it was that General Butler, the commander of the Butler forces, ordered a council of war that resulted in a general order to capitulate with honors of war.

Meanwhile a third army was being marshaled into the field, one friendly to the flying squadron but not hostile to the Butler guards. The third army consists of a troop of neighborhood "kids." In an effort to win the friendship of the flyers, Captain Kidd and the other kids are setting out food for them.

Captain Kidd's forces hope that the flyers will become tame and make their home in the vicinity of the Butler fortress, which General Butler hopes to retake in a couple of days. The juvenile warriors are now sprinkling the lawn with various kinds of nuts and bread crusts spread with sugar and honey. They are greatly amused by the antics of the flying squirrels as they scamper over the lawn and sail from branch to branch of trees in streets and yards.

Later dispatch from Huntington via wireless: General Butler and force are back in the Butler fortress, having taken it by storm. The enemy—the flying squad—are eating their own heads off, and Captain Kidd's troopers are about to attack with bean blowers.

Birds Know Meal Hour.

A clerk in a fruit stand in Seattle, Wash., and a score or more pigeons are reproducing on a small scale the spectacle which has helped to make St. Mark's Square, in Venice, Italy, famous the world over.

A few minutes before noon each day ten or a dozen pigeons alight by ones and twos on the curb in front of the fruit stand, then gravely walk across the sidewalk and into the passage which leads between the big banks of fruit on the one side and an array of magazines, big nut jars, and candy show cases on the other. Squatting beside the peanut jar is the clerk, bountifully supplied with peanuts.

As the birds approach, he takes two or three of the peanuts, crushes them in his fingers and scatters them before the approaching birds. There is a flutter of wings and a hastening of small feet as the birds scramble for their dinner.

"I started throwing them nuts about three weeks ago, and they were scared to death," said the clerk. "They

wouldn't come any nearer than the curb at first, but gradually they got bolder. For more than a week they have been walking right inside, and the time of their coming never varies more than five minutes."

Catches Fire in His Sleep.

Taking a nap in his buggy cost Robert Green, of Oldbridge, N. J., forty-two dollars in cash, a gold watch and chain, a suit of clothes, and a two-mile walk to his home.

Green had been to visit his brother in the country, and it was after midnight when he started to drive home. He placed his lighted lantern at his feet in the buggy, and as old Dan jogged along the country road, Green dozed off.

The lantern set fire to his trousers, and they had burned up to his knees before Green awoke. He jumped out and began to tear off his clothing. He was badly burned about the body before he had stripped off the blazing garments, and then he was amazed to discover that old Dan had kept right on toward home.

Green had to walk the two miles in only his underclothing and his shoes. He had forty-two dollars in cash in his trousers, and a gold watch and chain in his vest, but the fire made short work of these.

When he reached home he found that the lantern had also set fire to the buggy, and all that was left of it was the running gear and the four wheels.

Bear Killed by Train.

When the north-bound B., R. & P. passenger train from Bradford, Pa., reached a point between that place and Mount Jewett, a big black bear attempted to cross the tracks, and was struck by the engine and killed. The bear, not being mangled, was cut up, and the trainmen gathered up the meat and carried it to Olean, where they distributed it among friends.

Ostrich-egg Wedding Cake.

Miss Olivia P. Tescott, of Espy, Bloomsburg, Pa., is believed to be the only bride in America who had her wedding cake made entirely of ostrich eggs.

She was wedded to Frederick Blencowe by the Reverend F. O. Musser, at her home, and employees of the African Ostrich Farm & Feather Company, which also has its farm at Espy, furnished the eggs and hired a baker to make the unusual wedding confection.

Some Interesting Facts.

Of the many wonderful feats performed by Hindu jugglers, one of the most remarkable is the egg dance. Usually it is executed by a girl, fantastically dressed. She makes use of a willow wheel, around which at equal distances are threads, and at the end of each thread there is a noose, held open by a bead.

This wheel the girl places on her head, while she carries a basket of eggs on her arm. When the music strikes up she begins to dance, and the wheel begins to spin around. She then takes an egg from the basket, places it in one of the thread nooses, and throws it from her with sufficient force to draw the knot tight. The spinning of the wheel keeps the thread stretched, with the egg at the end of it.

She then takes another egg from the basket, places it in another noose, and repeats this until there is an egg in every noose. Her fantastic costume, her perfect motion, and all the eggs swinging on stretched threads at once present a curious sight.

It requires much art to execute the dance, for one false step would cause the eggs to be dashed together and the dancer to be disgraced.

After dancing for some time with all the eggs swinging round her head, she takes them out of the noose one by one, all the time keeping the wheel balanced and in motion, and again places them in the basket on her arm.

After the performance the spectators are allowed to examine the eggs, to see that they are real.

Oldest Gatepost?

Moses Ison, an aged farmer, living at Extra, Ky., is the possessor of a gatepost which is believed to be the oldest in the United States. It was cut from a cedar tree. According to reliable records, it has been in constant use for more than a hundred years. Inspection shows that it is good for generations yet to come.

Amazed by Own Shooting.

John Jack, a freighter, of Gillette, Wyo., while driving along a road noticed a jack rabbit sitting near the trail. He aimed his gun and fired, apparently without effect. He fired seven more shots, and after each shot the rabbit still sat and gazed at him, unhit. Disgusted, he leaped from his wagon and clubbed the rabbit with the butt of his gun. Then, to his amazement, he found seven other dead rabbits in the grass, each shot from his gun having killed a rabbit, without his knowing it.

What Dog's Pedigree Counts For.

Edward McDonald and his brother Michael, two typical Southern mountaineers, who have been living in the mountains back of Pioneerville, Iowa, for a number of years, and who still dress in the typical Tennessee mountain style, appeared at the Boise station with tickets to Nashville.

Edward McDonald remarked that he wanted to check his dog through and asked if he could get off at certain stations to feed and pet the animal. "That dog is powerful fond of me," he remarked, in explanation, as the station agent's eye fell upon the homely animal.

His face fell somewhat when he was told that it would cost him something like ten dollars to check the dog.

"Why can't he go on our tickets—we've got two?" he asked.

When told that he would have to pay seven and one-half dollars to St. Louis and another fee from there on, he said:

"Well, that cur thinks so powerful much of me, I reckon I'll have to pay it. It makes no difference about the kind of dog if you love him, you know." And he slowly counted out the money from an old miner's wallet and put the dog in the baggage car, with a final love pat on his head.

Adding an Hour to Day.

The scheme to add another hour of daylight to working people's "time off" is being revived in Chicago. It is proposed to change Chicago from central to eastern time. When it is noon in Chicago now, it is one p. m. in New York. Much confusion has resulted in railroad time schedules.

The change simply contemplates setting ahead the clock one midnight, and making it one a. m. Thereafter the

Chicago clocks would never be touched. There would be no change in the number of hours men and women would work, and there would be comparatively few advantages in the winter, but in the spring, summer, and fall every one who otherwise would be going home just at nightfall would have another hour of daylight for recreation.

While the clock would then be, say, at five p. m., it would really be four p. m. on the basis on which Chicago has been living.

Cleveland, Ohio, has stolen an hour from the night in the way it is proposed for Chicago to do.

British Song Not Barred.

Secretary Daniels received a letter objecting to an order reported issued prohibiting the singing of the song, "It's a Long Way to Tipperary," by enlisted men of the navy. Secretary Daniels denied that he had issued any such order or that he had any official knowledge that such an order had been issued.

Wind Blows Fish out of Water.

A wind that blows fish out of the water sounds fishy, or windy, but W. W. Hetherington, a banker, and, therefore, reliable, went hunting on Doniphan Lake, Kan., and the waves were running so high that thousands of crappie were washed ashore and stranded. Hetherington and a companion picked up as many as they wanted. The fish weighed from twelve ounces up to a pound.

Selling Rattlesnake Oil.

There is a constant demand for rattlesnake oil, so much so that F. B. Armstrong, of Brownville, Tex., is making a living from his rattlesnake farm. He sells the oil for eight dollars an ounce. It has a reputation for curing rheumatism, but some say it is the rubbing that drives away the pain.

Geese Impede Trains.

Wild geese congregating along the right of way of the Nevada, California & Eastern Railroad interfered seriously with the operation of trains. So numerous were the birds that several times it has been almost necessary to stop the trains that the birds might not be run over. When the great flocks rise from the track, the beating of their wings can be heard distinctly several miles away.

The geese have formerly been feeding in grain fields and marshes, but the lack of sand on the marshes, which the geese require as an aid to digestion, has driven them to the railroad, where sand is used as ballast.

The Oyster Crop.

There are two stages to Maryland's open season for taking oysters. On a prescribed date in October the tongmen are given a start in the race over those who operate dredge boats. On the first day of November, unless the month begins on Sunday, as it did this year, the dredgers are permitted to get into the scoop and scrape game, and then the oyster season is wide open.

The oyster yield from the natural or common bottoms of this State has grown steadily smaller during the last twenty years. There was a time when almost every one of the hundred or so canneries located in Baltimore continued operations through the winter months by substituting oysters for vegetables. Few of them do so any longer. Twenty years ago Maryland ranked first among the States as to the size of its annual oyster crop. That is so no longer. The Virginia yield has been developed through cultural methods, and is now larger than that of Maryland. Other States also are continuously enlarging their annual oyster crops.

Finger Looks Like Peanut in Zebra.

Because a zoo zebra mistook her finger for a peanut and ate it, Miss Carrie Durfy has filed suit in common pleas court against the city of Toledo, Ohio, for $3,000 damages. Miss Durfy is a milliner, and alleges that the injury has incapacitated her in her trade. She says that while visiting Walbridge Park on September 28th, the zebra, which she describes as vicious, leaped at her through a weakened fence, and bit off the middle finger of her right hand.

No United States Submarines for War.

Secretary Bryan announced that Charles M. Schwab had informed him that the Fore River Shipbuilding Company would submit to the views of President Wilson and would not build submarines for any European belligerent.

General's Advice to Boys.

General Nogi, idol of Japanese soldiery, wrote, some time before he died, the following note of instructions to the pupils of a school:

Keep your mouth closed. He who has always his mouth open shows that his mind is blank.

Mind what you are looking at. One whose eye is always wandering tells that his mind is also wandering.

Never indulge in luxury. There is nothing that makes a fool of a man like luxury.

How many of you wash your face with cold water in the winter? You should not use warm water.

It is a shame to wear torn clothes without mending them. But to wear the torn part patched is nothing to be ashamed of.

Know what is shame; he who does not know what is shame is inferior to dumb animals.

Become a man useful to your country. Whoever cannot be so is better dead.

Fatalities Among Aviators.

The *Echo de Paris*, quoting a well-known French aviator, says the proportion of deaths from aeroplane accidents is lower in time of war than in peace. He said only the most experienced pilots are employed at the front. The French losses are not given. The German Fifth Army Corps is said to have lost seven zeppelins and fifty-two aeroplanes, leaving the corps an air fleet of twenty-six dirigibles and 287 aeroplanes. Eighty-six German airmen have met death.

Our Country's Great Men.

In the small towns and in the country there are thousands of great men who are rarely heard of more than fifty miles from home. Drive through a farming community, and, when a big house is pointed out to you, the owner of which successfully farms several hundred acres of land, you have found another unknown great man. And you can ride from one end of the country to the other and never long be out of sight of the homes of unknown great men of this description. There are a dozen, or a

hundred, successful, useful, worthy men to every man who is really poor. Every good mechanic, on his way to become foreman, superintendent, or employer, is a successful man. We are a nation of rich men; that is the reason our country has such a prominent place.

Says General Tried to Die.

A dispatch from The Hague, Holland, says that Field Marshal Baron von der Goltz, who has been governor of the territory in Belgium occupied by the Germans, but who is said now to be on his way to Constantinople to take charge of the Turkish troops, attempted to commit suicide when he received a telegram from Emperor William announcing the appointment of his successor in Belgium. The correspondent gives as the basis for his dispatch reports received at The Hague from Brussels.

"It is said that Field Marshal von der Goltz," the correspondent declares, "took a room in the Palace Hotel, in Brussels, under an assumed name, and tried to shoot himself, but hotel servants broke into his room and disarmed him."

Smoker's Pipe Blown Up.

R. W. Livingston, of Florence, Ala., came near having a fatal smoke one morning this week, when he accidentally put a twenty-two-rifle cartridge in his pipe with tobacco which he carried loose in his pocket. The cartridge exploded and blew his pipe to pieces, but Mr. Livingston escaped with a slight skin bruise on his face. "Uncle Bob" will have to be a little more "keerful" with his smoking and shooting ammunition.

Russian General is Failure.

Lieutenant General Paul Charles von Rennenkampff, the veteran commander of the famous Fifth Siberian Corps in the Russo-Japanese War, had, since the retreat of the Russians through East Prussia from beyond Königsberg, eastward to the frontier, September 5th to 25th, been in command of the Russian operations in Poland.

A tragic episode in connection with General Rennenkampff's operations in East Prussia occurred on August 23d, when his army was trapped by General von Hindenburg in the Masurian Lake region and driven into the lakes and swamps. In this disaster, according to the German accounts, he lost 125,000 killed and wounded, 70,000 men captured, and practically all his artillery.

General Rennenkampff, who is sixty-four years old, comes from Estland and was educated at the military school in Finland and at the Nicholas Academy at Petrograd. For his achievement with the Fifth Siberian Corps in Manchuria, the czar rewarded him with a saber of gold and diamonds.

Sailor Prince is "Not Fit."

A medical board which examined Prince Albert, second son of the King of England, who has just recovered from an operation for appendicitis, has decided that he is not in fit physical condition to rejoin the fleet.

Powder Makers Were Not in Need of War.

Contrary to general belief, the manufacturers of explosives do not need war to give stimulation to their business. One of the officials of the largest powder-manufacturing companies in the country recently made the statement that only five per cent of the explosives manufactured are used in war. The rest are used in constructive work, mainly engineering and agricultural.

Without the use of explosives, this man said that it would have taken fifty years longer to complete the Panama Canal. The closing of the powder mills in America, he said, would result in greatly lessening the products of the mines. Instead of following the methods of the big-gun makers and endeavoring all the time to increase the armaments of nations, the powder manufacturers are trying to consistently bring before the public new uses for their products, as that is where the money is.

New Lock for Automobiles.

A "gasoline lock," which shuts off the flow of gasoline into the carburetor of an automobile and makes the stealing of a car practically an impossibility, has been invented by Doctor M. B. Light, of Indianapolis. It is a small and simple contraption, that fits any car. When locked, the only gasoline that can be used is that which happens to be left in the carburetor. A friend mistook Doctor Light's automobile for his when he found it in front of an office building, and started to drive away. He had gone about a block, when the engine missed, and the car stopped. The driver tinkered with it a while and finally pushed it to a garage, where the doctor found a repair gang vainly attempting to locate the trouble.

Twenty-seven Years in Game.

In the record book of 1887 we find the following names in the line-up of the National League clubs: Tom Daly, catcher, Chicago; Wilbert Robinson, catcher, Athletics, Philadelphia. Ten years later, in 1897, we find Daly with Brooklyn and Robinson with Baltimore, and in 1914, seventeen years later, or twenty-seven years after 1887, we find the two still drawing salaries in the baseball business.

Daly was south last season with the New York Yankees, and the splendid condition of the Yankee pitchers can be credited to the work Tom put in with them. Robinson is the successful manager of the Brooklyn team.

Aviator Defeats a Zeppelin.

A correspondent in northern France describes a battle between a zeppelin dirigible balloon and three British aëroplanes. The zeppelin maneuvered slowly and was unable to make use of its explosives. Bullets from the aëroplanes found the balloon's envelope, which crumpled up.

Aviators Shot in Flight.

Earl Annesley and his companion, Lieutenant Beevor, who disappeared early last month, after starting on an aëroplane flight from England to the continent, have both been killed by Germans. Countess Annesley was notified recently that the men were shot on November 5th, while flying over Ostend.

Lost Five Days in Desert.

Famished, crawling on his hands and knees, and close to madness, Samuel H. Baker, a Denver attorney and real-estate broker, arrived at Thompson, Utah, after having been lost five days in the Utah desert. Baker and M. J. Gill, of Denver, had gone to Salt Valley, twenty-two miles southeast of here, to inspect some radium properties. Baker, provided only with a light lunch, hired

a horse and cart and set out alone across the desert. At nightfall he reached a sheep camp and turned the horse out to graze. The animal returned to Thompson, and Baker lost his way.

Finds Gold in Geese Craws

The fabled goose that laid the golden egg had little on Puyallup, Wash., geese raised by Mrs. Roy Riggs, which were found to have gold in their craws. Each one of five geese killed by Mrs. Riggs for Thanksgiving produced half a spoonful of fine gold, the value of which was found to be ten dollars. She has been offered that sum each for the remainder of her flock of geese by a man who believes that fable history may repeat itself.

Copenhagen is German Mecca.

Copenhagen, Denmark, is now the mecca of Germans, and the hotels are full of merchants, salesmen, and others intent upon doing business with the neutral world, especially the United States.

The busiest office in town at present is that of the American consul general, and Mr. Winslow is doing his utmost to assist the exporters of America in the sale of their commodities.

Exporters should bear in mind, said Mr. Winslow, that only necessities can be sold to Europe at the present time, and no experiments will be made by Danish importers. Grain, cotton, flour, provisions, footwear, clothing, canned goods, metals, and all raw material will have the call.

World Police Force Urged.

The *Rotterdamsche Courant*, in an editorial, urges Holland, for the future maintenance of the peace of the world, to take the lead in a disarmament proposal, coupled with a proposal for the maintenance of an international army and navy under the control of a judicial court.

"This would be a world police force to keep the peace, not to menace it," says the newspaper.

Bomb Wounds Lady Decies.

Lady Decies, formerly Miss Vivian Gould, daughter of George Gould, of New York, who has been active in red-cross work at Dunkirk, France, for the last couple of months, happened to be passing close to the spot where a bomb from a German aeroplane fell recently. She was struck in the shoulder by a splinter of iron, and as long as she lives will carry the mark as a memento. Regardless of her own wound, Lady Decies went to the assistance of a little girl, who was injured by the missile.

Sleighs for War.

Big factories at South Bend, Ind., are busily engaged building sleighs to fill an order for the armies of the allies in Europe. Three thousand vehicles are wanted, the cost of which will be nearly $2,000,000, including the expense of transportation. The sleighs, it is said, will be used largely for the transportation of supplies, ammunition, and armament, but they also may be used for transporting troops.

Hog Pays Lodge Dues.

A small, squealing pig was the unique initiation fee which Walter Miller, junior, paid to join the Albany, Ore., Knights of Pythias Lodge, but there is no squeal from the lodge. On the contrary, as the result of the offer and an acceptance in a joking spirit, the lodge now has a good hog, which is worth more than the customary initiation fee.

Miller had expressed a desire to join the lodge, and was signing an application for membership, when he asked the amount of the initiation fee.

"I've got a lot of good hogs, and will trade you one of them for my initiation fee," he remarked jokingly, and members of the lodge promptly accepted the offer. He volunteered later to keep the hog and feed it free of charge until the lodge desired to sell it, and this he is doing.

Old-time Jockey Killed.

"Tommy" Knight, of Lexington, Ky., an old-time negro jockey, was killed while en route to Juarez, Mexico. Knight, while in his sleep, left his berth and walked out of the coach. He rode Dick Welles when that racer established a new record of 1:37 2-5 for a mile at the Harlem track, in Chicago, on August 14, 1903.

Sawdust in Place of Coal.

In the big plant at Toledo, Ohio, where the Overland automobile is made, the utilization of sawdust and scrap from the wood-working departments alone save $40,000 per year in the coal bill. The interior of the Overland wood-working shops is entirely free from shavings, sawdust, or other scrap material. Large tubes lead from the point on every machine where this waste drops to a central point beneath the floor, and to which all the waste wood products are drawn by a strong, forced current of air. The scrap is taken from this point by an endless leather belt to a powerful wood grinder, which completely pulverizes the entire mass. This crushed wood is blown by electric fans into huge bins located above the furnaces. Chutes from these bins lead directly to the fire pots, into which, at stated intervals, a fixed quantity is released by automatic means.

Bad Texan Captured Asleep.

Officers and citizens have captured Raymond Grayson, alias Jack Morris, near Jonah, twelve miles from Georgetown, Texas. After defying his pursuers and firing several shots from a rifle, he was found in the timber, asleep, and arrested. A rifle, which he had secured from a house on the Robbins farm on the San Gabriel River, was found beside him.

Grayson was formerly from Ohio and was convicted two weeks ago in the district court and sentenced to three years in the penitentiary, but was given a suspended sentence. When liberated, he terrorized the whole community by defying arrest and shooting his gun to emphasize his bold defi. Sheriff Allen placed Grayson in the county jail, and it is presumed that he will have to serve his prison sentence.

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